

BEIJING TODAY

北京青年报

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

July 23 2010 - July 29 2010

NO. 476 CN11-0120

HTTP://WWW.BEIJINGTODAY.COM.CN

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your exotic side

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Retro fans are using vintage technology to create new art and music.



Page 8 Walking the Wall for cancer

A Norwegian man is close to finishing his 50,000-kilometer trek along the Great Wall.

Old Beijing's final days



Beijing, first formed more than 800 years ago, is vanishing faster than anyone can imagine. Modern man's voracious appetite for high-rise buildings and broad avenues is devouring hundreds of its historic *hutong*.

Next on the chopping block is Daji Pian, or Daji Lane, a collection of 30 hutong, 300 courtyards and 78 provincial guild halls in the former Xuanwu District.

Before the bulldozers can strike, a local travel agency is inviting people for a final walk through the area.

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Income report makes neo-bourgeoisie of the homeless

By Han Manman

A recent report says Beijing's "middle class" has grown to include 5.4 million people, or 40 percent of its population. The national average remains 23 percent.

But many balk at the report, pointing to the reclassified citizen's inability to afford any of the luxuries normally associated with the middle class.

The report, issued by the Beijing University of Technology and Social Science Academic Press, relied primarily on income to estimate who is middle class, setting a monthly salary of 6,000 yuan per person or 10,000 yuan per family unit as its baseline.

The report divided the middle class into three strata. At the top were 560,000 Beijingers who are well-educated, influential and the owners of homes, cars and other luxuries. This upper stratum earned nine times as much as the lower stratum.

"The middle class has a responsibility to drive market demand, but high real estate prices and limited social security have made the large bottom stratum leery of spending," the report says.

The report also describes "middle class" as those who "have an intelligence-based profession or own a business" and who "have average economic and social resources but better-than-average cultural resources."

According to a report from the World Bank in 2006, the middle class in developing countries should be defined as those earning an annual per capita income of at least \$4,000 (27,100 yuan). The average annual income of a middle class Beijing resident is 71,076 yuan, two and a half times more than the minimum.

The World Bank also reported that only six developing coun-

tries in 2006 had a middle class that comprised more than 40 percent of their total population.

But many "middle class" Beijingers took issue with the label, World Bank be damned.

"How can you call me middle class? When have you ever heard of a middle class person who cannot afford a car or a house or clothes priced more than 500 yuan? The label is laughable," said Geng Jin, a 29-year-old Beijinger.

By working for a US company in Beijing Geng earns 6,500 yuan per month. However, she said those earnings do not translate into a middle-class lifestyle.

Geng pays 1,800 yuan for rent each month and another 2,000 for food and transportation.

"I also need to give my parents some money every month. That doesn't leave me with much," Geng said.

For her and many in Beijing's middle class, home ownership is an unobtainable dream.

"I think social classes should be defined based on who can own a home and who has to rent," Geng said.

In big cities like Beijing, where housing costs are completely out of step with income, home ownership may be more revealing of one's status.

Anders Bager, a Swedish computer engineer, said China's definition of middle class is far different from the one used in the West.

When media refer to the middle class in the West, they are referring to the population that controls the vote.

"In the West, the middle class is basically (what China calls) the working class — but with the added burden of multiple loans and mortgages," he said. "Chinese people who already suffer from other pressures while still struggling for a house should not be called a middle class."



Beijing's "middle class" still has trouble affording luxuries like homes and cars.

CFP Photo

Internet map providers must be licensed by year end

By Chu Meng

The first batch of 23 Internet map service licenses has been granted to providers, including Baidu, Sogou, Sina and Nokia.

Map providers who fail to win a license by the end of the year will be forbidden to provide map services in China, the State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping said this week.

The regulation, aimed at protecting state secrets, took effect May 17.

Under the new rules, maps must be labeled to be in line with government policy on disputed territories and military-related addresses must be removed.

While Nokia was the first foreign company to get approval for its Ovi Map service, other foreign applicants such as Google, Yahoo and Microsoft may have a more difficult time.

Google still allows users to post notes about coordinates to its online maps, a feature that may interfere with its license application.

The search giant's Internet Content Provider license was renewed by the government last week, and that may reflect favorably on the company when it is time to obtain a mapping license, said Wang Xing, a global positioning system and implementation expert at In-Stat Analysis China.

He said Google may need to make some adjustments in its service, such as blurring certain details or tweaking what information is available.

An announcement on the bureau's website Monday stated that applications from foreign firms will be examined in the context of China's Surveying and Mapping Law, which requires foreign mapmakers to seek approval from the armed forces and State Council.

Approved map providers will be required to keep their servers storing map data within the country and must have no record of information leaks during the past three years, according to the State Bureau's regulations.

Figures on the bureau's website said the total revenue of China's online mapping market rose from 245 million yuan in 2008 to 330 million yuan last year.

Baidu, Sogou and Google are the major online map providers and account for more than half of the market share.

A previous dearth of online mapping regulations led to several prominent cases in which state secrets were exposed.

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Community service for jail swap still exploitable, experts say

By Han Manman

A pilot program that swaps community service for jail time in Beilun District, Ningbo, Zhejiang province could be setting the trend for China's judicial reform.

Under the new program, those suspected of crimes are being sent to do community service in areas like traffic control, elderly care and charity distribution. Prosecution may be suspended for suspects who take the work seriously.

The new pilot system is open only to minors, students, senior citizens, the disabled, pregnant women, first-time offenders and those suspected of criminal negligence.

Only detainees suspected of minor crimes that could result in a maximum of three years in prison and those who would not pose a danger to society can be considered.



Wang Zuo (left) is working as a traffic assistant in downtown Ningbo.
Photo provided by Legal Weekly

Wang Zuo is one of 13 people benefiting from the Ningbo pilot, which has been in effect since May.

By performing well as a traffic assistant in downtown Ningbo,

Wang may avoid a jail sentence despite three months ago being involved in a traffic accident that killed a woman.

Wang, a driver, repeatedly apologized to the woman's

family and paid 600,000 yuan as compensation.

The Beilun District People's Procuratorate Office ordered him to participate in community service before continuing with criminal prosecution.

But many balk at the new system, saying it could provide professional criminals with an easy way to skirt the law.

"We can understand the public's misgivings since a lot of people are not clear about the system's limits," said program designer Pan Shemming, head of prosecution of the People's Procuratorate in Beilun District.

"The system aims to change the suspects' behavior without destroying their future with a criminal record," Pan said.

He said candidates for community service are chosen through strict procedures and with the consent of the victim's family.

Pan said the next step is to invite some citizens to supervise the procedure of choosing candidates and implement a hearing system to ensure justice.

Hou Xinyi, vice president of Nankai University's School of Law, said the use of community service and financial compensation is common practice for punishment in "legally developed countries."

"This program is to educate and assist those who commit crimes instead of only punishing them. All these efforts are praiseworthy and should be adopted, especially for juveniles facing criminal charges," he said.

However, Hou said a concrete definition of "minor crime" is essential to keep professional criminals from abusing the system.

Billionaire uses BMWs, boats and helicopters to catch crook



Liu Boquan and his private helicopter

Photo provided by Chutian Metropolis Daily

By Zhao Hongyi

Liu Boquan, a billionaire in Dongguan, Guangdong province, was driving his son and private helicopter pilot to dinner at around 6 pm, July 15, when he saw two people on a motorcycle rob a woman.

Liu accelerated his BMW and followed the robbers, who ditched their motorcycle and fled on foot.

One of the robbers was arrested immediately, the other jumped into a big pool on the side of the road.

Liu shouted at him to come out, but the man swam to the other side of the pool to escape. That was when Liu came up with the idea to use his private helicopter to help the police.

After clearing his plan with the police, his pilot flew the private helicopter near the pool to create huge waves, but the robber refused to get out.

Liu then radioed his private motorboat and caught the man together with a police boat one hour later.

Netizens met the billionaire's behavior with skepticism. Many said rather than helping, he was looking for an opportunity to make an extravagant display of his private assets.

"Helping the police to catch a robber is a good thing, but does it really require calling your personal helicopter and boat?" one netizen in Xingtai, Hebei province, said.

But many more supported Liu's attempts to emulate Batman's billionaire alter ego.

"It was a brave action and worth recognizing, especially with how Chinese people today are so unwilling to help each other," a netizen posting as the Dark Knight said. "The poor are jealous, but they are just blaming this tycoon to hide their own cowardice."

"I wasn't just showing off my fortune," Liu said, "I did all this without any ulterior purpose."

Liu has been running businesses in Dongguan for more than three decades. He got his start in the print and cement industries and later branched out to real

estate, hotels and restaurants.

"When I called my helicopter, it took two minutes to get to the pool," Liu said. "When I called the police, they took 12 minutes."

"I have always hated thieves and robbers," the tycoon said. "I have had three gold necklaces, four mobile phones and a jade pendant robbed from me on the street here."

On July 19, the local police in Dongguan awarded 40,000 yuan from the province's Bravery Foundation as a prize to the tycoon.

Liang Weifa, director of provincial public security, and Zhu Huisheng, the deputy director, visited Liu to affirm how important citizens can be in helping the police to stop crime.

"Liu Boquan's commitment to charity and justice has a long history," Cui Jian, director of Dongguan Public Security Bureau, said. "He has donated millions of yuan of his personal assets to support public security, medicare, culture and education."



Local police in Dongguan awarded 40,000 yuan to Liu.

Photo provided by Yangcheng Eneving News



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International schools may not be worth the cost

By Li Zhixin

International schools are popular with rich Chinese families keen to give their children a jump start on their studies abroad.

While the dream of leaving the country for college is one way to escape the national college entrance exam, foreign parents and those returning from abroad think international schools may be advertising more than they can offer.

It takes more than money to ensure a child's scholastic future.

Hopeful springboard

Zhang Zhuo, 41, an architect, is considering moving her 9-year-old daughter to an international school next semester.

While the relaxed and free environment of an international school may be more conducive to her daughter's growth, she hesitated, worrying it would be challenging for her daughter to adapt to a new environment.

That hesitation ended when her daughter's confidence was shattered by a teacher of a regular Chinese public school she was attending.

"Everyone in the family praises her intelligence and beauty. But her self-esteem was ruined by a teacher who said she was stupid when she answered a simple question wrong," Zhang said.

Now her daughter is afraid of hearing the school's name. "She will scream and cry when anyone mentions it," she said.

Drama aside, Zhang said she always planned to transfer her daughter to an international school later when she was older.

"I don't want her childhood memories to be nothing but pressure and competition," she said. "The social and extracurricular activities offered by international schools can help her to fully develop her personality."

She also sees the experience as training for study at a foreign university.

Yang Guodong, 46, a medical tech vendor, dreams of sending his son to an Ivy League school. Last year, he pulled the boy out of Beijing High School Attached to Renmin University for a transfer to Huijia International School.

His son's academic records were average in public school, and he was not confident the boy would score high enough on the national college entrance exams.

The new school gave him more room to develop himself. "He is pretty self-controlled, so he was able to learn a lot in the new environment," she said.

Many families are mirroring Zhang and Yang's decisions to use international schools as a study abroad prep course.

According to statistics published by the Ministry of Education, 840,000 fewer high school students chose to take the college entrance exams last year.

Early estimates predict that this year's figure will reach 1 million; as many as 21 percent of these students are heading abroad.

"Students bound for overseas programs are becoming increasingly young. The number set a record this year, with 20 to 30 percent of young students attending overseas high schools or enrolling in international schools," said Cheng Fangping, a researcher at the Central Institute of Educational Sciences.



International schools are popular with affluent Chinese parents.

CFP Photo

Weak under the surface

Foreign parents also hope their children can be admitted to a good university, but those choosing an international school do so only to link their children's studies to the Western education system.

Others, like Jiri Straka, the Czech father of an 8-year-old, find the international schools fundamentally flawed.

"Almost all international schools teach in English only, so I have to seek other ways to ensure my son's Czech language doesn't falter," he said.

According to Czech Republic law, Czech nationals who work overseas must ensure their children study their mother tongue at least 1 to 2 hours each day. Straka takes time off to see to his son's education personally.

"Each year, I am required to take

my son to Prague so he can take the language test. If he fails to pass, he won't be permitted to leave the country until he can," he said.

The 44-year-old father opted to send his son to Chinese public school, saying the country has one of the most excellent primary education programs and that Chinese will one day be the most important language in the world.

"International schools insist on providing a free and relaxed environment for students. Public schools attach more importance to rote memorization. I think the latter is better for children who are still at an early stage in their education," he said.

Straka also said many students at international schools do not take their Chinese studies seriously as the class is an elective.



Many parents are drawn to the schools' extracurricular activities that are intended to develop students' personalities.

IC Photo

"Many of them forget the language within several years. But you know, a person who can only speak English will not have any advantages in the future," he said.

He also frowned on the financial one-upping that seems endemic to the schools. "Time spent in a public school will help ground the children and make them understand what is normal. I would prefer their primary education be at a public school. They can attend an elite university later," he said.

Straka said he hopes his son can go to Charles University, one of the Czech Republic's best and his alma mater.

Danielle Cui, 38, a Chinese-American mom, has also been disappointed with international schools.

When her family relocated from the US to China, she enrolled

her son in an international school since his Chinese ability was limited. "I worried that he would develop mental problems (in public school) if he couldn't catch up to his peers," she said.

She registered him at an international school near their home, but soon learned its teachers were from Singapore and Hong Kong and spoke with a strong accent. Worried they would influence her son's accent, she transferred him to Beijing International School, the country's best and most expensive.

But the tuition has become an unbearable burden — especially since her company cut its tuition reimbursement program. "Paying \$18,000 (122,000 yuan) to \$25,000 in tuition for each year of senior high is very difficult for my family," she said.

A tiered system

The country's international schools are divided into roughly three categories.

The ones sponsored by foreign governments accept foreign students exclusively. "These schools are pretty good, but they don't focus on Chinese language and charge an astronomical 150,000 to 200,000 yuan per year," said Cheng Fangping. "Students at these schools usually have no interest in being involved in Chinese society. They tend to be smug."

The next level of private schools is funded by overseas Chinese and people from Hong Kong and Taiwan. These schools aim to bring in students from those areas and charge 100,000 to 150,000 yuan per year. "Many of them offer International Baccalaureate courses, but

the program has few qualified teachers in China," he said. "The schools focus on both English and Chinese, but their teachers tend to have strong accents," he said.

The cheapest of the international schools are the bilingual schools run by locals. Tuition ranges from 40,000 to 80,000 yuan per year, but the quality is very much inferior to the other schools.

"Bilingual schools have very few foreign teachers. The ones they do hire are just used as an advertisement to attract students," he said.

Many of the teachers are Chinese nationals who graduated from a foreign studies university. The textbooks and methods used have little connection with Western education.

Dawn of Chinese domain names

Navigating Internet becomes easier for a billion people



The Web will be more accessible for Chinese netizens after the use of Chinese top-level domain names was approved. Illustrated by Jiao Shu

Analysis

Chinese speakers get easier access to Internet

The Web will soon be a lot more accessible for a billion people after the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) green-lighted the use of Chinese characters in top-level domain names.

Jonathan Shea, chief executive of the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation (HKIRC), one of the bodies that will implement the changes, said Chinese people currently rely on search engines to find websites since Latin alphabet domain names make it difficult for most of them to remember or guess address.

Many companies and organizations that are only known by their Chinese names are often lost in cyberspace, Shea said, as they are forced to take on unfamiliar English domain names.

"The availability of Chinese top-level domain names will solve these problems once and for all," he said.

The China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), the government-linked domain name registry agency, lauded the change as recognition by the international community of the growing Chinese presence online.

Chinese characters accepted

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the California-based corporation that manages domain names and IP addresses, agreed in a meeting July 12 to start using Chinese characters for suffixes handed out by Chinese mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan-based Internet registrars. It started allowing

Arabic earlier this year.

"This approval is a significant change for Chinese language users worldwide," said Rod Beckstrom, president and chief executive officer of ICANN. "One-fifth of the world speaks Chinese and that means we just increased the potential online accessibility for roughly a billion people."

This is the second step in the adop-

tion of international domain names (IDN) after a long debate over their introduction. While domain names written in non-Latin script may be great for local markets, they may create big problems for the Web at large.

The first three IDNs went live a couple of months ago for Arabic-speaking Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. (Agencies)

The third eye

Chinese top-level domain names will benefit online community

By Huang Daohen

The use of Chinese characters in top-level domain names will promote Internet use among the elderly and benefit commerce, said Wen Yijun, an analyst at Oriental Securities in Beijing.

"The move represents one small step for ICANN, but one big step for one-fifth of mankind, which uses non-Latin scripts," Wen said.

Wen said domain names with Latin alphabets, including email address and shopping websites, have always been confusing to many Chinese people.

Some have particular difficulty distinguishing between the pronunciations of the letters "l" and "r," which often lead to mistakes in every day communication.

Men Honghua, a researcher with the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, regards the exclusive use of Latin alphabets in domain names as a reflection of Western cultural dominance.

Men said in a recent interview with Xinhua News Agency that Internet addresses of the

future should be multilingual, with the use of both Latin and non-Latin script.

Since their creation in the 1980s, domain names have been limited to combinations of the 26 Latin alphabets, the numbers zero to nine and the hyphen.

"A multilingual address system is only the first step toward a more international Internet that reflects cultural diversity," Men said.

Men said the launch of Chinese top-level domain names has huge market potential, explaining that giving Chinese people easier access to the Internet would greatly improve the efficiency of Chinese online businesses.

Foreign firms wanting to do business with Chinese customers would also benefit, Wen said.

Related

How to register Chinese domain names

Only Chinese companies and citizens may register using a Chinese top-level domain name or the ".cn" domain, according to regulations by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC).

Foreign organizations or individuals who want to apply for Chinese top-level domain names

can apply through CNNIC's two overseas offices, in Singapore and Malaysia, but these foreign bodies need to have majority ownership of a Chinese subsidiary. The Chinese subsidiary must be the registrant and the contact person must be a Chinese national.

The fee to register a Chinese top-level domain name is 280

yuan per year.

The following documents are required for registration:

- Application form with business seal of applicant company
- Copy of business certificate in China
- Copy of identification card of contact person who must be a Chinese national. (By Huang Daohen)

Will China rate the World?

Credit rating report raises doubts



Dagong's report aims to break the triopoly on global credit rating.

CFP Photo

The US, Britain and France have lost their AAA credit rating according to Beijing-based Dagong Global Credit Rating.

The unique conclusions of the organization come as a clear challenge to the dominance and ideology of the credit world's big three: Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's.

Report downgrades US

A credit rating report of 50 countries has downgraded the value of US treasuries.

The report, released by Beijing-based Dagong Global Credit Rating on July 11, gave greater weight to "wealth-creating capacity" and foreign reserves than those prepared by Western rating agencies.

Dagong's report covers 37 countries in Europe and Asia, eight countries in South America and North America, three in Africa and two in Oceania; together they generate 90 percent of world's GDP.

The credit rating of China's local currency was rated AA+, and some foreign currency was rated AAA with a "stable" outlook.

But according to the rating, the US rating fell to AA; Britain and France slid even further to AA-. The currencies of Germany, the Netherlands and Canada were rated AA+.

The report is at odds with those prepared by Fitch, Standard & Poor's and Moody's, which rated China as AA-, A+ and A1, respectively, while awarding the US, Britain and France AAA ratings.

Dagong's ranking for the other BRIC nations — Russia, Brazil and India — are also higher.

The national management capacity of these countries continues to improve and economic growth potential is stable in the long term. Fiscal stability and the ability to resist external shocks are increasingly better," the report said.

Criticizing Western agencies

Dagong does not conceal its ambition to compete with Western rating agencies and is not shy about criticizing them.

"The ongoing financial crisis — which began in the US and is being continued by the Greek debt crisis, have fully revealed the defects of existing sovereign credit rating agencies. In this

context, the international community has reached a consensus to reform the international credit rating system," Dagong said in a press release.

CEO Guan Jianzhong said that, "intrinsically, the reason behind the global financial crisis and debt crisis in Europe is that the current international credit rating system does not accurately depict a debtor's repayment ability and provides the world with inaccurate credit rating information."

Ratings philosophy

Dagong said that its core belief is that "it is newly created social wealth that supports the national funding capacity and constitutes the primary source of debt repayment" — thus its unique focus on fiscal revenue rather than financing income.

A country that relies on borrowing money to cover its debt obligations is less stable than a country that uses tax revenues to repay its debt, even if the former country can borrow with relative



Guan Jianzhong, president of Dagong Global Credit Rating

IC Photo

ease and certainty.

"Dagong emphasizes the country's capability to pay its debt," the firm said.

Damon Vickers, managing director at Nine Points Capital Partners, agrees with this concept, remarking that many Western countries are functionally insolvent.

Vickers said that Western credit rating agencies, by assigning them the highest ratings, are acting as "enablers" and covering up the reality of functional insolvency, and thereby hampering the process of admitting this problem and working toward a solution. (Agencies)

Analyst insight

The birth of domestic credit rating

By Huang Daohen

Whether Dagong's report has practical meaning or not, the company has taken a big first step, said Li Shuyou, an economics professor at Beijing Technology and Business University.

There are no international standards for the credit rating industry. Western credit rating standards have long been the dominant method, frequently putting China at the tail end of Fitch, Standard & Poor's and Moody's triopoly, Li said.

However, Li said the US-based credit ratings agencies' monopoly would leave them-

selves with no credibility. The past global financial crisis and debt crisis in Europe have exposed the shortcomings of US credit rating standards.

Li said the big three credit raters use a system that depends on real capital and focuses on the entities' capital, management, financial status, financing as well as macro- and microeconomic situations.

But an entity's credit is also affected by its social relationships and the credit environment of society as a whole — things the numbers usually ignore, Li said.

The global financial crisis has given other countries a chance

to reconstruct the global rating system. "It is an opportunity for domestic credit ratings agencies to stake out a position," he said.

To some extent, Li said Dagong's list is reasonable as emerging economies were less damaged during the financial crisis.

But when considering the maturity of financial systems and China's own structural problems, the report can be seen to draw on several irrational factors, Li said.

Zhao Xiao, professor with University of Science and Technology Beijing, agrees with Li. Especially because Dagong has not released its rating models or

benchmarks, he said.

China's capital market is structured very differently than markets in foreign countries, and there is no easy way to compare the two.

"It will take time for domestic agency's reports to gain acceptance worldwide," Zhao said.

He said Chinese agencies need to think first about how to build a world-level brand before reshaping the face of credit.

"The key question is whether domestic credit rating agencies can be fair and objective in ranking assets when they tell the world that Moody's is failing to assess all the facts," Zhao said.

China to be emerging market for retail real estate

By He Jianwei

The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) announced last Friday that ICSC RECON Asia 2010, the annual regional edition of the council's convention and exhibition, will be held at the Beijing International Hotel and Convention Center in November.

It is the first ICSC convention and exhibition on the mainland in five years and calls for global retailers to push into China's developing markets to bolster declining growth at home.

According to the latest Global Retail Development Index (GRDI), China's already huge retail sector is the world's fastest growing emerging market.

"Choosing China for this year's event was a no-brainer," said Marvin Morrison, senior vice president at ICSC. "China is going to be leading the global recovery, and the typical driver for that is retail."

Morrison said real estate investment in China more than doubled to \$156 billion (1.05 trillion yuan) last year. Investment during the first quarter of this year totals \$50 billion.

In the US, real estate investment fell 46 percent during the same period.

Shanghai was first and Beijing third on the ICSC's annual list of Asia's Top 10 investment prospects released in 2009.

In its quarterly report on China's retail real estate, sales of retail real estate in Beijing and Shanghai have increased about 119 percent and 157 percent respectively during the first quarter of this year.

But because land is limited and the government is trying to crush rampant property speculation in big cities, many investors are eyeing other cities such as Chengdu, Kunming, Jinan and Shijiazhuang.

"The latest GRDI data shows something we have observed for some time now: Chinese and Asians in general are clearly comfortable with international shopping formats, albeit nuanced to suit local preferences," Morrison said.

He said some large Chinese cities have a glut of malls. "Many of them focus on luxury brands and don't provide any 'real service' to the community. RECON Asia is a chance for professionals in the retail real estate to share experiences," he said.

The annual meeting and showcase draws together the industry's leading retailers, developers, investors, planners and architects.

The conference will have experts to address industry challenges and opportunities in China and the Asia-Pacific region, to talk about exploring new sites and introducing fresh concepts and to discuss new concepts for outlet centers in Asia.

2026 World Cup in China?

By Wang Yu

The Chinese Football Association is preparing to submit its proposal to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup to the General Administration of Sport of China (GASC) – the government's top sporting agency.

This is not the first time the soccer association would broach the idea. But Wei Di, president of the association, told the press last weekend he is confident about China's chances of getting picked to host the premier soccer tournament after seeing South Africa's impressive performance.

During the recently concluded World Cup, Wei flew to South Africa twice to watch the opening ceremony and the semi-final and final matches. He said the experience was "very moving" and that the event held great economic potential for host nations.

Wei also said hosting the World Cup would help improve the national team's performance. He said the South African team actually ranked below the Chinese team, and that its league was similarly underdeveloped.

Wei's latest pronouncements have

thrown him in the middle of a controversy. He took charge of the football association half a year ago, at the height of the cheating and gambling scandals involving the Chinese Football Association Super League (CSL), and both soccer fans and commentators doubted his ability to turn things around.

In March, Wei announced plans to include the Olympic soccer team in the CSL – an idea that was criticized by fans and observers. Three months later, on June 12, the Olympic players faced the Liaoning Hongyuan team in their first CSL match. However, the national team will not be part of league's ranking.

The World Cup's 70-year history has shown the quadrennial tournament move from continent to continent. The next Cup will be hosted by Brazil, and the next two will likely be held in Europe and then North America. Wei said it is expected to return to Asia in 2026, and that China should prepare for a hosting bid.

He said the country's successful staging of the 2008 Olympics will increase its chances of bringing the World Cup here.

Comment

Play better first

The South African team ranks even lower than ours yet they were chosen to host the World Cup. But look at the result: they were not able to go beyond the first round. As a soccer fan, I don't want to see us hosting a World Cup where our team will play like shit.

Chinese soccer still has many problems: the system is not well designed, we lack young talents and insiders are only concerned with making profits and ignore the sport's long-term development. It appears that Wei knows nothing about soccer.

– Vincent Wen, IT engineer

Great idea

I think hosting the Cup is a great idea. Just look at how many Chinese came out for this World Cup and China was not

even in it. It will encourage more Chinese people to get involved in the sport. It doesn't matter if the Chinese team is horrible; it's the organization, the stadiums and the fans that make a World Cup.

– David Reynolds, soccer coach from Britain

Unrealistic plans

Anything can happen in one year, and 2026 is such a long way off. Maybe China's soccer performance will be better, maybe not. The only time our team made it into the World Cup was in 2002, when the event was hosted by both Japan and Korea – and when two additional spots were given to Asian teams. This may not happen again, and I think Wei wants to host the tournament so that as host, the Chinese team will automatically

qualify for a spot. This seems like your typical bureaucratic posturing: he wants to try and leave a mark even when his plans are not grounded in reality. Just ignore him.

– He Yuxin, magazine editor

A long way to go

The recent World Cup again showed the distance between China and the world's top squads, including Asian teams like Japan and South Korea, which have made huge progress in recent years. It's understandable that a government official knows nothing about the sport – because it makes no sense to put the national team in the league. Chinese soccer has a long way to go.

– Guo Jiaming, technical researcher with FIFA



CFA president Wei Di says he is confident about China's chances of getting picked to host the 2026 World Cup.

CFP Photo

Art teacher poses nude to salvage class

By Zhang Dongya

The principal of an art school in Nanjing posed nude for students when the class model failed to show up at the Zhongshan School of Arts and Sciences.

This caused a stir in the local community and provoked a discussion about proper behavior for teachers, who are expected to be models of virtue.

The principal, Yang Linchuan, 43, is a painter and musician, whose oil painting "Peace Gandanra" is on display at the Shanghai Expo's UN Pavilion.

After the nude painting class at Zhongshan, someone posted naked photos of Yang on the Internet. The poster identified herself as a female

member of the class, and described being excited at seeing Yang in the buff.

Yang, in an interview with the local *Yangtze Evening News*, said the class was composed entirely of male students, and that he decided to pose nude because none of the students would volunteer to model.

He said that as an art teacher his actions were reasonable, since cancelling the class would have been a waste of students' time and money. He said the online post was probably a student's prank.

Yang added that it was his first time to pose nude, but that he did not feel ashamed or embarrassed.

Comment

Nudity in art is different

Nudity is not sex. Nude art is not meant to be arousing. It is meant to teach artists how to properly draw the human body, and to tell viewers how to appreciate the beauty of the human form.

– O'Reilly, netizen

Distance produces beauty

In our class, we use professional models whom we only see once, so it does not feel awkward to look at them naked. But teachers whom you see every day – I don't

know how you'd be able to interact with them normally after seeing them naked. I can only imagine it would be very embarrassing.

– Song Yun, student at Fujian Art Vocational School

Judged out of context

The incident happened in art class, but when the media brought it to public attention, it was judged by "non-artistic" standards and such opinions should be ignored. It is natural for art students to paint a nude, and the teacher

should not be criticized for trying to help them during a difficult situation. It is ridiculous to criticize this rare incident.

– Liu Honglei, art and theater designer

Gutsy, admirable teacher

The teacher showed guts, and that should be admired – not criticized. The teacher has become a model of virtue for his students: be brave for art's sake.

– Eric Qian, hotel manager

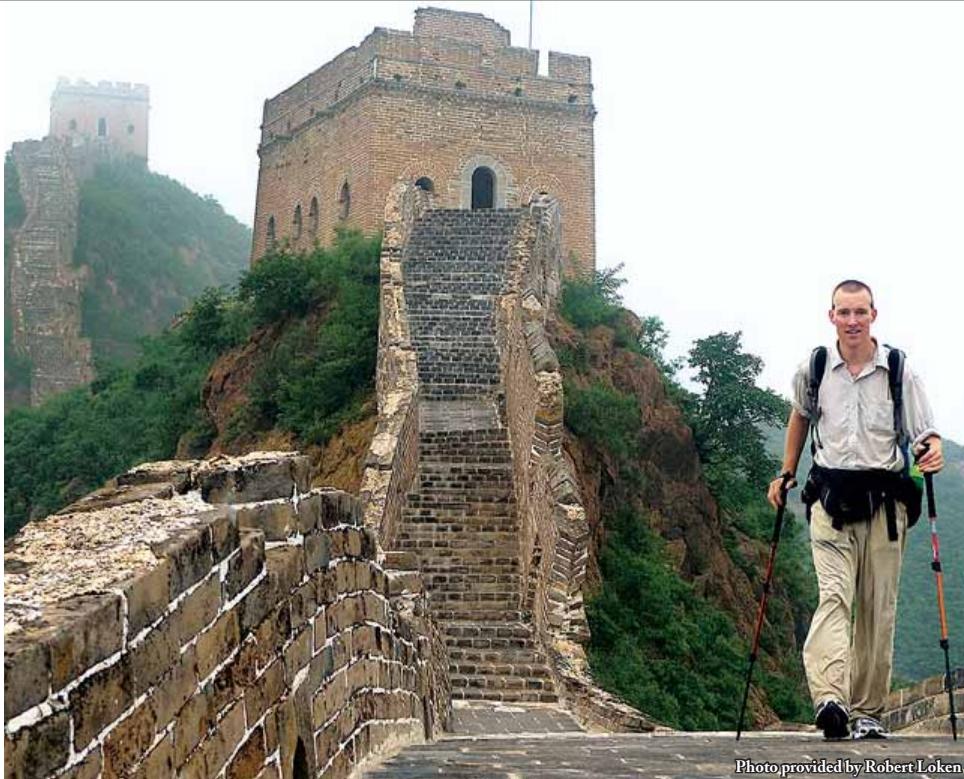


Photo provided by Robert Loken

The Great Walker

Norwegian close to accomplishing dream of walking length of Great Wall

By Chu Meng

A 42-year-old Norwegian computer engineer quit his lucrative job, sold his house in Oslo and spent his life's savings to follow a dream: to walk the entire length of the 50,000-kilometer Great Wall.

After 14 months and 42,000 kilometers, Robert Loken has reached Beijing. He tells *Beijing Today* of an adventure that includes braving the scorching summer and frigid winter, battling scorpions and snakes, and enduring the pain of cuts and blisters.

A 20-year-old dream

Robert Loken first learned of the Great Wall at 19. It was 1987, and he was visiting Hadrian's Wall in northern England, when he chanced upon photos of the Great Wall in a youth hostel. "Beside the pictures were the words, 'The Other Wall.' That was what sparked my dream," Loken said.

But making that dream a reality would take another two decades. "At my parents' New Year's dinner in 2007, I casually mentioned that I was considering walking the entire length of the Great Wall. My parents froze," Loken said.

"By being open about it, I hoped they would not think I was absolutely, raving mad," he said. The long wait also worked in his favor among family and friends, "since they knew I had spent a considerable amount of time making the decision."

Walk for cancer research

Loken spent nearly two years preparing his mind and body for the grueling trek. In April 2009, he took the starting line at the Wall's western end, in Jiayuguan, Gansu province. At that point, his mission had taken on greater significance: it would also be a walk to raise money for cancer research worldwide.

"I had contacted an international cancer foundation through friends, and the plan involves people donating money to the charity when I complete my walk. Hopefully the effort will result in more advanced treatments."

Loken lost an uncle to cancer in 1998, and some friends and relatives are currently battling the disease.

"Your time is limited, so do not waste it living someone else's life." Loken has posted this adage from Apple co-founder Steve Jobs on his blog thegreatwallker.com, which documents his expedition.

"This is the way I communicate where I am — and how the day has been — with my closest family and friends," he said. "If you go to the 'route' page, you can see exactly where I am at any time."

Conquering nature and isolation

Loken is a seasoned backpacker, but nothing could have prepared him for the challenges of the Great Wall.

His first hurdle was the searing summer heat in the Gobi Desert, where he began the trek. His hiking shoes also turned out to be too small, so he developed a lot of blisters. Water supply became a problem as well. "I always had to plan in advance where I could get more water," Loken said.

In addition, the Wall follows the contours of the land, so certain sections are very steep and extremely dangerous to climbers.

After about half a year, it was the cold weather Loken had to overcome. "I was in Shanxi province, on the border of Inner Mongolia, during the coldest period of winter," he said. "This was very hard as the temperatures often dropped below -20 C at night. My water turned to rock-hard ice,

so I had nothing to drink in the morning."

The closer he got to the end, the more arduous the journey became. "In the beginning, I made myself walk 15 to 25 kilometers per day with a heavy rucksack on my back. As time went by, it was the isolation that became the hardest thing to bear," he said. "My Chinese is basic, so I could not make enough conversation with villagers, which made me feel worse."

One thing that helped was an endorsement letter from the China Great Wall Society, which explained Loken's mission to locals.

Special moments to victory

But there were also little joys in the solitary journey. Loken said the best part of the day was waking up inside his tent pitched on the Wall. "After a good night's sleep, I feel lucky and grateful that I have this chance to follow my dream of 20 years," he said.

He has an MP3 player and lots of audio books to keep him company. He would listen to music or the books for an hour or two at night. Sometimes he used the time to update his blog via mobile phone.

"This is my way of keeping a journal, so that in 30 years, I can read about all the adventures I had along the Great Wall of China," Loken said.

He is also looking forward to collecting on the cash pledges for cancer research when his journey ends in Liaoning province in three months.

Cirque de Soleil founder mentors Beijing acrobatics troupe

By Chu Meng

Tianqiao Acrobatics Theater, the home of Beijing acrobatics in the Ming Dynasty, reopened last weekend with a show directed by the founder of the famed Canadian troupe Cirque du Soleil.

The show, *Magic Music Box*, performed by the Beijing Acrobatics Troupe, integrated Beijing acrobatics, magic, dance, mime and comedy with Western circus acts.

The show was many firsts for the hundred-year-old troupe, said its director Dong Youmin. "It was the first time we had a marketing-oriented show. It was also the first time a traditional Chinese acrobatic show had a foreign director," Dong said, referring to Cirque du Soleil's Guy Caron.

Caron, founder of the National Circus School of Montreal, became Cirque's pioneering artistic director in 1984. He left the troupe in the 1990s to produce and direct circuses throughout Europe, but returned 10 years later.

In his collaboration with the Beijing Acrobatics Troupe, Caron has emphasized the need for leaders with a greater understanding of theater and marketing. "Chinese acrobats' performance lacks the style of modern theater and interaction with the audience," he said. "Most Chinese directors are acrobats, but marketing considerations necessitate a more theater-oriented artistic director — it can be a stage designer, a musician, even a drama director."

Dong said Caron is already introducing new approaches to local acrobats. "During rehearsals, he usually stops performances, asking artists to communicate directly with the audience through exaggerated body language and facial expression."

Dong said Caron is also very particular about lighting and stage design. "Our performers hardly recognized the stage at the beginning," he said, adding that Caron has likewise invited US and Canadian musicians to be part of the show.

Caron said that Western acrobats also need to learn Eastern acrobatic styles, which are rich in oriental cultural elements.

The director is a fan of Chinese acrobatics and created for Cirque the character Dralion after he returned from a Chinese study tour five years ago. Dralion, a portmanteau of "dragon" and "lion," combines Western and Eastern elements and was inspired by the *pixiu*, a mythical Chinese creature that is half dragon, half lion.

"Dralion was built around five elements: fire, air, water and earth, plus a fifth element that the Chinese believe in — the soul," Caron said. "In it we incorporated the 2,000 years of Chinese acrobatic tradition with the more than 20 years of Cirque de Soleil avant-garde style."

Traditional acrobatics may be fading from the consciousness of Chinese people, but it is still undeniably one of the biggest cultural attractions for foreign tourists.

"Acrobatic shows are one of the best-known and must-see tourist attractions in Beijing, comparable to Peking Duck and the Great Wall," said Rosita Wong, 33, a Canadian businesswoman visiting the city. But she said she noticed a "lack of Chinese people in the audience."

Diplomacy and culture fuse as Czech embassy becomes art gallery

By Chu Meng

The newly renovated Czech embassy in Beijing turned into a gallery for displaying works from Czech and Chinese artists earlier this week, part of a wider attempt to expose more people to contemporary cultural achievements from the two countries.

"Embassyart" is a three-year cultural exchange program aimed at building bridges between Czech and Chinese cultures and promoting young artists from the two countries. "One of my dreams is fulfilled today. I am very glad to see such a great rainbow for culture exchange being established," Czech ambassador Libor Secka, who assumed office in Beijing nine months ago, said at a press conference.

Secka said China and the Czech Republic are two countries with a rich tradition of art. And amid China's fast economic

growth, there is huge need for cultural and artistic nourishment. "The way to feed such demand is to give the public direct access to diverse art. 'Embassyart' is one access point," Secka said.

As an art enthusiast, Secka had wanted to increase cultural dialogue between the Czech Republic and other countries for a long time. Strolling through the embassy, one can tell the ambassador has good taste in art.

The Czech embassy, located close to Jianguomen, is an escape from the downtown bustle. It has a beautiful and tranquil garden, and the interior was partially designed by Secka himself. Gray walls are decorated with tall, abstract paintings by modern Chinese painter Wei Qingji. Among simple and chic furnishings are Czech crystals from museums.

Secka said that Chinese people have traditionally shown a strong interest in

Czech culture, citing the success of the Czech Cultural Festival in China in May.

Embassyart will eventually bring together painters, musicians, photographers, dancers and others from the Czech Republic and China for joint exhibitions, concerts and other cultural activities. The project also aims to highlight new creative possibilities opened up by interaction between the worlds of diplomacy and culture.

The inaugural event will take place this evening at the embassy. It will include a concert by talented young Czech soprano Marketa Matlova, accompanied by guitar player Matej Freml, and an exhibition of Wei Qingji.

"If you want to get to know a country, please expose yourself to the art and culture of that country," said a representative from Czech automobile maker Skoda, one of the main sponsors of the program.



Ambassador Libor Secka shows a crystal lion as a prize for artists.

Photo provided by the Czech Embassy

China and WildAid launches campaign to protect marine life



Students are one of the target groups for promoting awareness of aquatic wildlife protection. Photo provided by Li Dongshuo

By Han Manman

China is No. 1 in both shark fin consumption and shark conservation, according to a survey conducted by WildAid and the China Wildlife Conservation Association. Lack of awareness is to blame for the former, while the latter gives conservationists hope for the future.

WildAid president Steve Trent said that 35.1 percent of those surveyed in China said they have consumed shark fin soup, but 76.3 percent of those didn't know it was made from sharks.

As part of a nationwide initiative to educate the public on the importance of marine life, a month-long campaign was launched last weekend in the name of aquatic wildlife protection. More than a hundred organizations were involved, including WildAid,

major aquariums, nature reserves and wildlife rescue centers across the country. This is the largest collaboration of its kind in Chinese history.

Li Jianhua, director general of the Bureau of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture, said China is one of the most bio-diverse nations on Earth, making its flora and fauna of global importance. Given its unique climate, geography and history, the country's aquatic wildlife is characterized by a wide range of species with distinctive features across a broad spectrum of ecosystems.

Li said nearly 20,000 aquatic species have been identified so far. "However, as a result of growing human activities in the form of damming rivers, claiming farmland from lakes, shipping and coastal engineering, the living space for

aquatic life has been squeezed extensively," Li said. "Migration routes are cut off. Habitats and ecological environments have suffered. The conditions for species' survival keep worsening."

Li said the situation is near critical and that a national campaign is very much necessary.

China's initiatives have drawn praise from outside observers.

"We applaud the initiative by the Chinese government to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of the marine environment and species like sharks, which are so vital in maintaining ecological security," Trent said.

Trent said that though the culture of eating shark fin soup won't change overnight, the campaign will encourage people to think about the issue and perhaps make different choices.

Aviation is focus of latest Ukraine-China talks

By Li Zhixin

Ukraine is seeking another direct flight between Kiev and Shanghai to cope with steadily increasing passenger and freight demand, Ukrainian ambassador Yurii Kostenko said at a press conference Tuesday afternoon.

Last week, Ukraine's minister of foreign affairs Kostyantyn Gryshchenko visited China for high-level talks regarding bilateral cooperation in civil aviation. There are currently only three flights between the two countries, and the minister called upon the Chinese government to add one more from Shanghai to Kiev.

The Chinese government has made no promises, Kostenko said, adding, "The two sides are still in negotiations."

China's participation in the two-part Kiev Airport expansion project was another subject of the talks. The first part is the construction of runways that will cost about \$350 million (2.4 billion yuan); the second is a \$650-million (4.4 billion yuan) project to create an airport express that shuttles passengers from the terminals to downtown. "China would fund the entire project, while Ukrainian companies provide technology and manpower," Kostenko said.

The ambassador reiterated Ukraine's desire to develop relations with China.

"Ukraine has witnessed China's rise and its great achievement during the financial crisis, so Ukraine's leaders have a keen interest in building friendly relations with China," Kostenko said. "Ukraine will use China's successful economic model as reference for promoting Ukraine's reform."

Kostenko said the minister also discussed what preparatory work is being done in anticipation of Ukraine president Viktor Yanukovych's official visit to China in September. "There are no policy differences between the two countries, and the political dialogue between the two sides is becoming more and more positive," Kostenko said.

The ambassador said Yanukovych will sign a series of framework agreements with China regarding customs, agriculture, energy, economy and trade during his visit.

Young African expats commemorate Mandela Day

By Liang Meilan

In November 2009, The United Nations declared July 18 Nelson Mandela International Day in recognition of the South African leader's contributions to peace and freedom. To commemorate the anti-apartheid leader, who turned 92 on July 18, a group of African expats in Beijing hosted an event to raise awareness of the power each individual has to change the world around him.

Young African Professionals and Students (YAPS), with support from the United Nations Development Programme-China (UNDP China), organized a movie screening and performances at The Bookworm in Sanlitun that was attended by scholars, international relations specialists, government officials and young entrepreneurs.

The event was a valuable opportunity for dialogue between young Africans and people from other cultures. "The theme of the event today is the life of Mandela and what he did for the people of South Africa, which has affected all of us Africans and all people in the world," said Vimabayi Kajese, YAPS media coordinator.

"I'm very impressed by the impassioned speech given by YAPS's executive director, Coana Sebastiao," said one of the attendees, Huang Yixin, a sophomore



A Mandela commemorative event at The Bookworm

at Communication University of China. "I very much agree with what he said, that 'like Mandela, every single one of us has a gift and talent that enables us to make a contribution to the world in a very wonderful way.'"

Sebastiao, paraphrasing Mandela, also said, "Once you discover that gift, do not play small; it does not serve the world. Think big and aim high so that you can share your gift with others."

More young Africans are coming to China – there are currently about 250,000 Africans in this country – YAPS was founded

in 2009 to help these newcomers get better acquainted with life in China.

"Through years of bittersweet experiences here, we recognized the importance of unity and building a centralized platform for networking and information sharing among young Africans in China," Kajese said. "The platform will surely serve as an important pipeline to position young Africans in China as active participants in the development of Sino-African relations."

Kajese said the group aims to equip young students with the ability to continue building coalitions when they go back to Africa. While African and Chinese ties have come a long way, there is still work to be done.

Vimabayi Kajese, a 28-year-old woman from Zimbabwe who is the mainland's first African news anchor on CCTV International, understands the challenges but has also seen the rewards. She said her on-screen presence may help develop cultural bonds between Africans and Chinese.

"In the past, Chinese people didn't see many Africans," Kajese said. "They don't understand the way we talk and our hairstyles and so on. Now, because I'm here, to some extent, it has started dialogue. It's also good for Africans who come to China, as they will know there is opportunity for them here as there is for any other foreigner."

"In line with Mr. Mandela's vision of a society in which all people live together in harmony and with equal opportunities, UNDP strives to empower the world's poorest and most vulnerable to lead better lives," said Silvia Morimoto, deputy country director of UNDP China. "I praise YAPS for bringing to light Mandela's set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life."

Photo provided by YAPS

Event

Lecture: Nine principles of the Forbidden City

The Forbidden City is the world's foremost example of Chinese imperial architecture, reflecting a complex evolution of symbolism, feng shui and culture. To spread its value, a lecture organized by the China Culture Center will reveal the mysteries of the Forbidden City and explain the nine principles reflected in the construction of the emperors' palaces. English translation is available.

Where: China Culture Center, Room 101, Kent Center, 29, Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District

When: July 23, 7:30-9:30 pm
Tel: 6432 9342
Cost: 50 yuan

Ladies-only snowboard competition at Nanshan

Mellowparks, a professional snowboarding event organizer, is hosting a women's snowboarding competition at the NIKE 6.0 Summer Lab, a summer snowboard training venue featuring a range of jumps and jib features. The fun consists of three mini events – a boardercross race, a funbox and a jump session. The winner of each session gets a pair of NIKE 6.0 women's kicks.

Where: NIKE 6.0 Summer Lab, 6 Shun'an Lu, Shunyi District
When: July 24, 3-4 pm
Tel: 13810459745
Cost: 200 yuan

Pangbian Film and Music Festival

Professional and amateur contemporary independent filmmakers from mainland China, Taiwan, Canada, the US and Mexico will screen their films in the afternoon. Indie folk duo La Loupe will then perform to celebrate the release of its debut album. Additionally, the Pangbian Recipe Zine will be available for those in need of creative recipes.

Where: 2 Kolegas, drive-in cinema park, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
When: July 25, 3-8 pm
Tel: 13552276845
Cost: Free

Weekend hike

The Beijing Outdoor Hiking Club organizes regular weekend events. This Saturday, its destination is the Nine Eye Tower in the Jiankou Great Wall area. This is a looping walk over steep and rocky terrain with a bit of rock-climbing thrown in. The club is a non-profit subsidiary of CnAdventure. For more information, check out the website CnAdventure.com and navigate over to the Outdoor Club tab at the top.

Where: CnAdventure, Room 208, 2/F, Elephant Investment Tower, 1 Dongbinhe Lu, Dongcheng District

When: July 24
Tel: 5166 9102
Cost: 150 yuan

(By Liang Meilan)

Bachelors auctioned off for good cause



Mitch Moxley, 30, volunteered himself for the auction; Allison Johnson (right) was the event sponsor's co-founder.

Photo by Janek Zdzarski from zdzarski.com

By Annie Wei

Last month, the speed-dating organization Fishbowl Events held its first-ever Bachelor Auction Party at Face Bar, where nine single expat men strutted their charisma, personality and talents to win the affections of the mostly female audience.

"I was quite nervous at first,"

said Mitch Moxley, a 30-year-old journalist from Canada who volunteered for the auction. "But it turned into a lot of fun. We all remembered it was for charity, and I think the audience had a good time too."

Moxley, like many of the other bachelors, got his friends to back him up. He was auctioned off for 850 yuan.

In the end, Fishbowl raised 11,200 yuan for Tse Reh Orphanage in Qinghai Province, an area where many children are orphaned due to extreme weather. Tse Reh Orphanage aims to educate these children in order to preserve their native Tibetan language and heritage. Since the Qinghai earthquake

in April, many children have relocated to Beijing, where the cost of housing and education is drastically higher.

Fishbowl Events was founded in 2007 by Allison Johnson, a 30-year-old American, and Ola Zdzarski, a 29-year-old Pole. Their events are selective but usually attract a mix of expats and local Chinese.

Water Cube reopens August as Asia's biggest indoor water park

By Chu Meng

The National Aquatics Center, more popularly known as the Water Cube, will reopen August 8 to become Asia's biggest indoor water park, the Beijing State-owned Assets Management Company announced Wednesday.

The Olympic venue has been transformed into a public facility at a cost of 200 million yuan, with its public area expanded from 50 to 70 percent, said Miao Meng, the management company's public relations manager.

"The rest, the 30 percent, is reserved for official use, since the Water Cube will continue to host national and international sporting events, as well as large-scale performances at the main swimming pool, which is surrounded by 6,000 fixed seats as it was during the Olympics," Miao said.

The renovated Water Cube consists of four main sections: the main swimming pool, a warm-up pool, an Olympic demonstration area and an indoor water park. The 12,000-square-meter water park features facilities and equipment that have never been seen in Asia.

Inside Park Hall are 11 leisure spots, including Deep Sea Windstorm, Crazy Tsunami, Seafloor Shuttle, Dream Drift and 11 slides, the tallest of which is 23 meters.

The water park will be open from 10 am to 10 pm year round, and operators are expecting to see 3,000 to 5,000 visitors a day, or 1.5 million a year.

Tickets to the park go on sale August 8 at 200 yuan for adults and 160 yuan for children 1.2 to 1.39 meters tall. Children shorter than 1.2 meters enter free.

More economical tickets for



The 12,000-square-meter water park features facilities and equipment that have never been seen in Asia.

visitors on limited time are available as well. A ticket for those who only want an indoor tour of the Cube costs 30 yuan, and another just to use the swimming pool for two hours is 50 yuan. Groups of more than 10 people are eligible for discounts.

How to utilize Olympic venues and facilities after the Games end is a major challenge for every host city. Beijing decided to turn its Olympic Park into a public leisure area, and

5 million visitors have already toured the Bird's Nest and the Water Cube since the park opened for public use last October. Ticket revenues have reached 200 million yuan, according to the Beijing Olympic Park's organizing committee.

But operators are still trying to come up with better ideas to maximize the sporting venues' potential. "We cannot only depend on people's enthusiasm for the Olympic Games to oper-

ate the stadium. It will not last long," Miao said. "What we need to do is infuse more cultural significance and organize more interesting activities."

Wang Chun, an official from the park organizing committee, was quoted by local media as saying, "The Olympic Green still has about 2 million square meters of space available for construction. And all this will further boost economic development in the region."

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I'm tired of standing in line at supermarkets, so I'd like to know if there's a way I can do my shopping online. I speak very little Chinese, so I need an English website.

There are several trustworthy online shops catering to foreigners. We recommend Dong-Xi and Benny.

Dong-Xi

This shopping agent's service includes making special orders for customers and shipping overseas. Its members can use PayPal or Alipay to pay for purchases, and its delivery system allows members to save up to 75 percent on international shipping.

Web: Dong-Xi.com

Benny Store

All products at Benny Store are guaranteed genuine; otherwise the company will repay the customer 10 times what he or she spent. It provides free delivery service to people who live in downtown Beijing (within Fifth Ring Road), Shunyi and Chaoyang districts. No minimum purchase is required, but only cash on delivery is accepted.

Web: beijingshoppings.com

I'm moving from Dalian to Beijing next week and would like to join a soccer team. I've played the sport since I was a kid, so I want something fun but also challenging.

Check out China Club Football, which hosts regular tournaments at its soccer field in Dongbeiwang, Xisandi, Haidian District. The club's teams also compete in other amateur tournaments. It's quite competitive on the five-a-side league, but the season just ended and it's not meeting again until September. Visit their website, wanguoquxiong.com, for more information.

Tour de France began almost a month ago, and I'm frustrated because it's not broadcast on CCTV-5. Can you suggest a venue where I can watch it?

Why not try viewing it online? Below are some websites where you can watch the race live or on replay. Videos on these sites are high-definition.

letour.fr/us/
homepage_courseTDF.html (French)
de.eurosport.yahoo.com/audioplayer.html (German)
es.eurosport.yahoo.com/audioplayer.html (Spanish)
it.eurosport.yahoo.com/audioplayer.html (Italian)

(By Liang Meilan)

Capital Airport now offers free Wi-Fi

By Liang Meilan

The Beijing Capital International Airport's upgraded wireless Internet system went into trial use Monday, with free Wi-Fi service in all three terminals.

"The first two days of test runs showed that the equipment is operating well and the signal is strong and stable," Duan Fei, an airport official, said. "No Internet breakdown was reported and no feedback regarding bad connections was received."

Using the free Wi-Fi involves presenting one's identification card. "Passengers can easily get a ticket with an account number and password by having their identity card or passport scanned at the numerous self-service machines in the terminal," Duan said, adding that each ID can be used three times per day.

Each ticket entitles a person to five hours of free Internet use, or as much as 15 hours a day with the three tickets. There are three ticketing machines in Terminal 1, 10 in Terminal 2 and



Capital airport offers free Internet service.

16 in Terminal 3. Beside each machine are brochures in Chinese and English with information such as how to go online and where to get the strongest Internet signal.

As Asia's busiest airport with an annual passenger volume of

60 million, the Capital Airport this year formulated new measures to better serve travelers. Besides providing free Wi-Fi, the airport is preparing to open next month 12 free recreational areas near the boarding gates.

"Delayed flights are a head-

ache to many," said Li Yiming, manager of the airport's marketing department, "but with these recreational areas, passengers can sit and relax while surfing the web, playing games, watching movies or listening to music."

The airport is also expanding its Special Passenger Service to cater to the handicapped, senior citizens, children and tour groups.

"Free wheelchairs and staff assistance are available at the airport. Passengers who need such services should register three days in advance on the airport website, via its service hotline or at the airport service counter," said Xu Xinpei, manager of the airport's management department of the airport.

Xu said the airport can also help arrange a new flight for tour groups that miss their flights because of uncontrollable factors such as traffic jams.

For more information, visit the airport's website, bcia.com.cn, or call its hotline 6454 1111 or 6454 1100.

Trampling mora

Cologne Opera asks What if Don Giovanni lived to 1630

When the new *Don Giovanni* debuted at the end of June in Cologne, its director never imagined he was sitting on a run-away hit.

"It was World Cup month and 60 to 70 percent of all Germans are soccer maniacs. The people going to the theater then are usually just trying to avoid soccer," Uwe Eric Laufenberg, artistic director of the Cologne Opera, says.

Laufenberg has been artistic director since the start of the 2009/2010 season. One of his first proposals after appointment was this *Don Giovanni* adaptation.

From the beginning, Laufenberg was set on making a modern version. But many attempts to update the opera backfire.

"Last year, when a modern version was performed in Provence, France, the audience greeted the performers with boos and hisses," he says. "The success of the premiere was a great surprise."

But Laufenberg had more problems than immediate failure on his mind.

In Germany, all opera houses are entirely government funded. "In the US, if an enterprise sponsors an opera house, the enterprise gets a tax cut. But in Germany, enterprises cannot get a tax cut, so finding outside sponsorship is difficult," he says.

Almost every German city has an opera house. These are supported by money gleaned from the local government's 5 percent tax that supports culture development.

As a new director, Laufenberg has a five-year contract. Any failure during the first two years would result in his immediate termination.

"The operas never stop. They just change directors," he says.

His worries proved unfounded when the opera sold out. "When over 70 percent of the tickets sell, it means you will not lose any money," he says.

Laufenberg attributes the opera's success to a fascination with Don Giovanni, the legendary bumbling and the greatest seducer of all times.

"(He doesn't love) individual women, no, he loves all women, across all the social strata, and regardless of whether they belong to another," Laufenberg says.

"Mozart's opera tells the tale of a womanizer and his thirs for pleasure, presenting the audience with the enduring themes of guilt, regret, love and death."

Laufenberg follows Mozart's story as Don Giovanni tries to seduce Donna Anna. Don Giovanni has cast his spell on countless women with the help of his servant Leporello. The difficulties for Don Giovanni – that ultimately end in his condemnation to hell – begin when he kills Donna Anna's father, the Commander, during an unexpected duel.

He shows no remorse for the murder, or for any of his other deeds, and scoffs when his deserted former lover Donna Elvira, shamelessly takes advantage of Leporello.

Don Giovanni places himself above all principles, moral and religious alike, but his deeds do not go unpunished.

Laufenberg sets these century-old characters in the high-tech era. In the opera, Don Giovanni lives in a luxury apartment, wears suits and uses a cell phone.

"What we do is imagine Don Giovanni's life in our days – his costumes, accessories and style of conversation," Laufenberg says.

In the old version, his servant Leporello helps to record Don Giovanni's amorous exploits: in the new version, Don Giovanni put his lovers' names, pictures and a description of their affairs in his cell phone.

"In Italy he has 46 lovers, in Germany 230, in France 100 and in Turkey 91. Spain is where Don Giovanni really outdid himself by conquering 1,003 women," Laufenberg says. "If he lived today, it would be easier for him to manage the information using a cell phone."

In Mozart's version, Don Giovanni's lovers belong to three social strata – the notable Anna, the middle-class Elvira and the farmer Zerlina.

But Laufenberg sets the three characters' background in modern Germany. Anna belongs to the upper class, Elvira the middle-class and Zerlina is a Turkish migrant.

"Today's Germany has a migrant problem, especially from Turkish migrants. They earn little and have become the new underclass," the director says.

Although he changes the settings of the story, the theme of the opera still remains.

The hero of Mozart's opera represents the breaking of every kind of border – especially those erotic and social. His motto "Viva la libertad!" is, for the people who live within the established social order, an almost unacceptable challenge. Don Giovanni pays for his libertine ways by going to hell.

"Don Giovanni is a modern figure for all times. He doesn't belong to Mozart's time, because he was simply bad by moral standards," Laufenberg says. "Today's people would not treat him as an amoral betrayer anymore. If you look around, you can find many people like Don Giovanni who have many girlfriends and are unwilling to marry."

But Laufenberg finds that Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* is a classic not because of the controversial character, but because of its theme of death.

"Don Giovanni is afraid of death, so he 'enriches' his life by indulging with women," Laufenberg says. "People always escape from what they fear to face."

It has been 10 years since the Cologne Opera visited Asia. When music director Markus Stenz collaborated with Laufenberg to produce this opera, he told Laufenberg about his pleasant visit to China two years ago as conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Cologne.

With its opera house now under restoration, Cologne has been invited to the Shanghai Expo 2010. Its 215 singers and musicians begin their China tour in September, first in Shanghai and then in Beijing.

In Shanghai, they will perform Richard Wagner's epoch-making masterpiece *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung).

By He Jianwei

Don Juan is a legendary many authors in many lan-

Spanish Baroque drama 1630. Among the Don's be-Byron's epic poem in Eng-

But one of the most infi-posed by Mozart and first

Last month, Cologne Op-modern times, which quick-modern-day, cell-phone w



"Don Giovanni is a modern figure for all times. He doesn't belong to Mozart's time... Today's people would not treat him as an amoral betrayer anymore."

"Don Giovanni is afraid of death, so he 'enriches' his life by indulging with women. People always escape from what they fear to face."

I borders

today?

libertine whose story has been told many times by
guages.
artist Tirso de Molina first put the character in a play in
est-known appearances are Molière's play in French,
ish and Pushkin's play in Russian.
ential versions was the opera *Don Giovanni* com-
performed in 1787.
era presented a new version of *Don Giovanni*, set in
kly became a hit in Germany. Two months later, the
ielding *Don Giovanni* will take the stage in Beijing.



Don Giovanni

Where: Opera House of the National
Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Xi
Cheng'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 29 - October 1, 7:30 pm
Admission: To be determined
Tel: 6655 0000



Don Giovanni tells the tale of a womanizer and his thirst for pleasure, presenting the audience with the enduring themes of guilt, regret, love and death.

Photos provided by Wu Promotion

Travelogue of Chinese environmental concerns

By Li Zixin

China's environmental problems are the perennial focus of Western media, and the picture they paint is damning.

But *Guardian* environmental journalist Jonathan Watts' new book, *When a Billion Chinese Jump*, makes a radical departure from Western reporting to present an objective, panoramic view of the country's environmental problems.

The book is a journey through an environment in crisis.

Watts, who conducted 300 interviews and trekked 100,000 kilometers of industrial wastelands, melting glaciers, cancer villages, science parks, coal mines and ecocities, has been reporting on China's environmental issues for seven years.

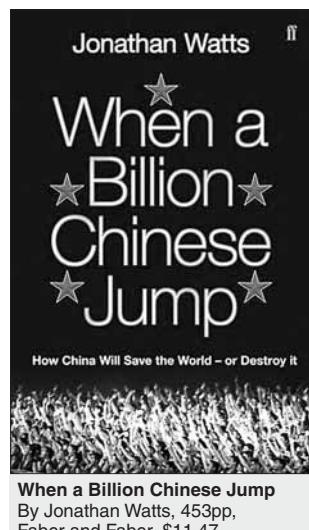
He draws on experience to examine how society's upper crust responds to environment chaos, and narrates the hopes of the lower classes left to suffer.

While bleak and even depressing, the book's message speaks with hope as it describes the government's herculean efforts to salvage an environment caught in a tailspin. Watts said the country is longing for new ideals to replace the grim materialism of the last 30 years.

"However, many Western media still hold old-fashioned and Cold War mentality on China's environmental problems," he said. "Although China has invested heavily in new energy and renewable energy sources, Western media only report that China is building coal steam-electric plants daily, instead of reporting that it also erects a wind power station every hour."

Water shortage is the country's most pressing problem as it affects basic survival. "Pollution is not a long-term problem, but the shortage of resources is," he said. "It goes without saying that northern areas like Gansu and Inner Mongolia lack water, but southern China also faces a water crisis."

One year ago, Watts visited Yunnan



When a Billion Chinese Jump
By Jonathan Watts, 453pp, Faber and Faber, \$11.47

Province and saw a lake full of water. When he returned this year, it was as dry as a desert. He also saw a lake located between Hebei and Inner Mongolia vanish within 10 years.

"The speed of desertification is shockingly quick. You can feel how sharp climate change can occur in such a short span, and it greatly affects the local economy and people's lifestyles as many become immigrants," he said.

Even the great engineering solutions intended to divert water from south to north fall far short of the country's needs.

"They do not solve the root of the environmental problems. We need to figure out what on earth has caused these problems first," he said. "Overconsumption, which is a

global problem, is the most likely culprit. As long as there are people demanding more food and bigger buildings, the pressure to clear wetlands and forests will grow."

The country in its current state is a victim of 200 years of Western consumerism. "Excessive waste, a human mistake, hit China (even worse) when it began to copy Western development patterns. Now China is facing a war with its environment," he said.

Some have argued that China can utilize one of the key tricks that made Western development so rapid – the export of pollution to one's neighbors. Following this theory, China could salvage its home turf as long as it earns enough money.

But Watts says China is far too late to the game to depend on exporting its pollution and importing resources.

Another major problem is the mentality behind "insourcing," a phenomenon that moves heavy polluters deeper into the country and away from the east coast.

While the country has a sound advantage of advanced legislation on environmental protection, most of it is impossible to enforce since the government lacks executive power. "Many people between the central government and the problem shirk the law to pursue profits. Some polluting companies which are hated on the coast have become distinguished guests of the relatively underdeveloped north where people do not grasp the need for environmental protection and the local government wants money," he said.

Although many developed countries at the Copenhagen climate conference last year proposed aid packages to help the developing world solve its environmental problems, Watts said money and technology are not the answer.

"The only way to change people's values is with education," he said.

To undo years of miseducation will be an incredible challenge.

Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of international art, design and architecture books.



Gahan Wilson: 50 Years of Playboy Cartoons

By Gahan Wilson, 942pp, Fantagraphics Books, 1,075 yuan

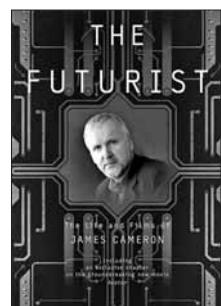
Gahan Wilson is a popular and beloved cartoonist, whose work has been seen by millions in the pages of *Playboy*, *The New Yorker*, *Punch* and *The National Lampoon*. He is revered for his playfully sinister take on childhood, adulthood, men, women and monsters. His brand of humor makes you laugh until you cry. It's about time a collection of his cartoons was published that did justice to his vast body of work.



The Blue Room

By Eugene Richards, 168pp, Phaidon Press, 750 yuan

Eugene Richards is best known for his books and photo essays on cancer, drug addiction, poverty, emergency medicine, the mentally disabled, aging and death in America. His intense vision and unwavering commitment have led him to become what many believe is America's greatest living social documentary photographer. This book is one of Richards' most personal works to date.



The Futurist
By Rebecca Keegan, 288pp, Random House, \$24

puter graphics to a new level.

His instinctive understanding of asymmetry gave the combat scenes real power. He demanded the impossible from his actors with whatever possible means: "To help them feel an explosion, he boomed a noise over amplifiers, threw foam particles at them and whacked them with a padded jousting pole," Keegan wrote.

Perhaps the real secret to Cameron's success is that he was a sci-fi-reading, comic-book lover decades before Hollywood began to indulge in computer-generated effects and caped crusaders.



Beasts!: Book Two

Edited by Jacob Covey, 218pp, Fantagraphics Books, 270 yuan

In the spirit of 2007's acclaimed *Beasts!*, editor and designer Jacob Covey has assembled an entirely new lineup of 90 artists who did not appear in the first volume. Like the first book, the deluxe collection includes a Who's Who of the contemporary art world. Its two pages craft a menagerie of mythological creatures, monsters, beasts and things that go bump in the night.

(By He Jianwei)

Secrets of Avatar director's success explored in new bio

By Charles Zhu

James Cameron, the king of sci-fi and blockbuster filmmaking, packed cinemas last year with *Avatar* – a movie some critics already call a landmark in 21st-century cinema.

TIME correspondent Rebecca Keegan visited Cameron on the set of *Avatar* in 2008. In *The Futurist*, she expands on her original article with insights into the life and films of the genius so associated with *The Terminator*, *Aliens*, *The Abyss* and *Titanic*.

Many of his breakthroughs were born of a naturally restless and inquisitive mind.

When he was a boy in Chipawa, Ontario, he sent some mice over the edge of Niagara Falls in a small submersible made from old mayonnaise jars, an Erector Set and a paint bucket. Another time, he made a hot-air balloon out of a dry-cleaning bag and some candles, floating it down the street until someone reported it as a UFO and called the firemen.

At the age of 8, Cameron became preoccupied with the end of the world after discover-

ing a pamphlet in his parents' living room describing how to build a fallout shelter, "a life-changing epiphany," Keegan said, and one that shaped his ideas of Armageddon.

The book follows the filmmaker's odyssey to Hollywood. After the family moved to California, Cameron took a job driving the hot-lunch truck for the Brea Olinda Unified School District and began scribbling plot ideas about blue people and bioluminescent planets while boning up on matte processes at the University of Southern California library.

In 1977, he saw *Star Wars* and decided that someday he would make his own movie. "That's when I got busy," he said.

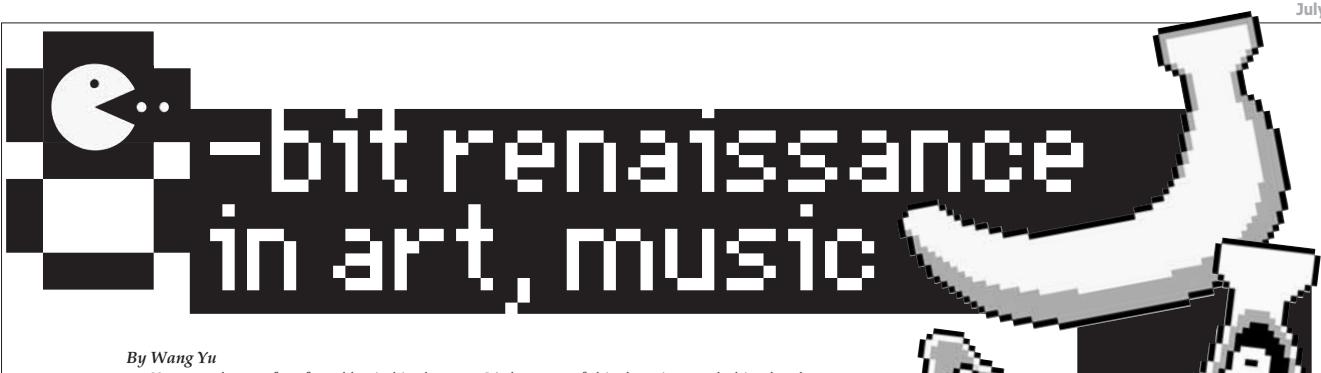
He quit his job and set out to learn how to make even better movies himself. He tested his special-effects wizardry with a Hollywood budget when making *Aliens*. He built an immense underwater set for *The Abyss* in the massive containment vessel of an abandoned nuclear power plant. The book devotes some

space to describing Cameron's nearly fatal fascination with the sea. He almost died when his sub ran out of oxygen while shooting *The Abyss*; a similar expedition during *Titanic* almost turned deadly when his sub ran out of power.

Cameron spent three months writing the scripts for *The Terminator*, *Rambo* and *Aliens*, figuring out how many pages per hour he had to write, then cranking them out to an accompaniment of "Mars, the Bringer of War" from "The Planets." In little more than a decade Cameron transformed from the scrappy filmmaker who made *The Terminator* for \$6.4 million (43 million yuan) into the man who made *Titanic* for more than \$200 million (1,344 million yuan).

However, Cameron is renowned for his temper. Keegan told stories from four of Cameron's ex-wives to testify to his controlling nature.

The Futurist also offers a glimpse into the making of *Avatar*, the decisive breakthrough that pushed 3-D, live action and photo-realistic com-



By Wang Yu

New trends are often found buried in the past. It's because of this that vintage clothing has long been the darling of fashion mavens.

But the past has more to offer than just new trends in fashion.

A new group of retro fans are giving high technology a resounding rebuke by turning to old tech for expression. Whether it is by electronic music made on a Nintendo Game Boy or pixel art, many young artists are discovering they had something very special in their youth.



Illustrations provided by Jovi Xu

Justin Liang, a 28-year-old graphic designer, just moved into a new apartment.

The wall behind his desk is decorated with pictures of blocky people, cars and animals set against solid-color backgrounds. The style is reminiscent of the computer graphics seen 20 years ago on early Nintendo and Sega video game consoles.

"I downloaded these from the Internet. The figures are abstract and use simple colors, but they look cool. Sitting in front of them reminds me of when I used to play Super Mario Bros. on the Nintendo Famicom (Entertainment System) in primary school," Liang says.

But that 8-bit Nintendo went the way of the Koopa in the early 1990s. It was part of the third generation of video games that began in 1983.

Earlier video game consoles by Atari and Coleco had also used 8-bit processors, but it was only during the third to fourth generation transition that systems were classified by "bits."

This era was when most '80s kids got their first game machines. Many still remember afternoons spent punching in the "Konami Code" to get extra lives in *Contra*.

"Then a new generation of video games began with Sega's new 16-bit Megadrive (Genesis). The graphics and sound were much better, and we dumped our old Famicoms," Liang says.

But when he stumbled on pixel works by foreign artists, he found new value in the old style. "It's not just nostalgia. They use the blocks to build new worlds. The colorful shapes look even cooler when set against a high-resolution background," he says.

Yancong, a comic artist and editor of the independent comic series "Special Comic," began making pixel art in 2004 after he was inspired by eBoy, a pixel art group in Berlin. In early 2009 he held a pixel art exhibition at 798's Star Gallery.

"At that time I was drawing pixel art using Adobe Photoshop. Unlike in comics, pixels are a clean and simple ways to express ideas. From 2007 to 2008 I made one picture every day and posted it on my blog. That was how I got the attention of the gallery's owner," Yancong says.

Yancong graduated from the China Central Academy of Fine Arts, so to him, pixel art was just one of many ways to express his imagination using a computer.

But the form has also opened the door for less trained artists.

Jovi Xu, owner of Bad Taste, an online shop in Guilin, Guangxi Province, is well-known on the Internet for her pixel art. Xu's works are weird, violent scenes with SM overtones. The women in her pictures are bound or brutalized – and these are her more innocent creations.

"My inspiration comes from my childhood, my dreams and strange imagination," she says.

"I started to create pixel art in 2006 when I was influenced by eBoy and Sukehiro Maruo. I never thought about what to draw next – ideas just came to me. Art was not my subject in college and I have never been trained, but pixel art is easy. It is not something that requires a foundation in painting," Xu says.

Local musicians are also looking back to 8-bit technology.

Sulumi, one of China's first 8-bit musicians, got his start in rock but switched to Game Boy in 2005. A year later he released his breakthrough 8-bit album *Stereo Chocolate* to fan and critical acclaim.

The music sounds similar to background tunes heard in 8-bit games. When he performs on stage, he dances to the beat generated by the Game Boy in his hand. He said 8-bit music can be sexy or violent, not just nostalgic.

"*Stereo Chocolate* is good and Sulumi is better on stage than in recordings," says music critic Charlotte Lan. "The first 8-bit record I listened to was Family Music by the Japanese chiptune band YMCK. The cover art was great and the music was special, though it got repetitive after a while."

As an electric music fan, Jovi Xu says her favorite Chinese artist is Baifan, whose works are like an electronic mosaic.

"The most important thing 8-bit art has brought me is identity. I found courage, tolerance and confidence in creating art. When I'm creating something, I can talk myself away from loneliness and suspicion," Xu says.

The 8-bit world in brief

The term pixel art was first coined by Adele Goldberg and Robert Flegel at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center in 1982. The concept goes back 10 years earlier to Richard Shoup's SuperPaint released in 1972 by Xerox.

eBoy is an art group often referred to as the "godfathers of pixels." It was founded in 1997 by German artists Kai Vermehr, Steffen Sauerteig and Svend Smital. Based in Berlin, eBoy's founders collaborate with Peter Stemmle in New York to produce graphic designs for Coca-Cola, MTV, VH1, Adidas, Gola and Honda. Their complex illustrations have appeared on posters, shirts, souvenirs and at gallery exhibitions.

New York artist **Nathan Sawaya** extends pixel art from computer to **Lego** bricks. He first came to attention in 2004 when he won a US nationwide search for a professional Lego Master Model Builder. Sawaya had his first solo art exhibit in the spring of 2007 and his works have been collected by 10 US museums.

Before the 2000s, 8-bit music was rarely performed live except by **Coin**. Songs were traded exclusively as executable programs or similar computer formats. The first record label releases of 8-bit music can be found in the late 1990s.

The 2000s brought a new wave of chiptune culture, boosted by the release of software such as Little Sound DJ for the Game Boy. This new culture has more emphasis on live performances and record releases than the tracker culture, of which new artists are only distantly aware.

Essential 8-bit sites

8bitpeoples.com – a record label publishing chiptunes

hello.eboy.com – pixel art found in the wild

brickartist.com – the website of Nathan Sawaya

chiptune.com – a huge collection of chiptune music

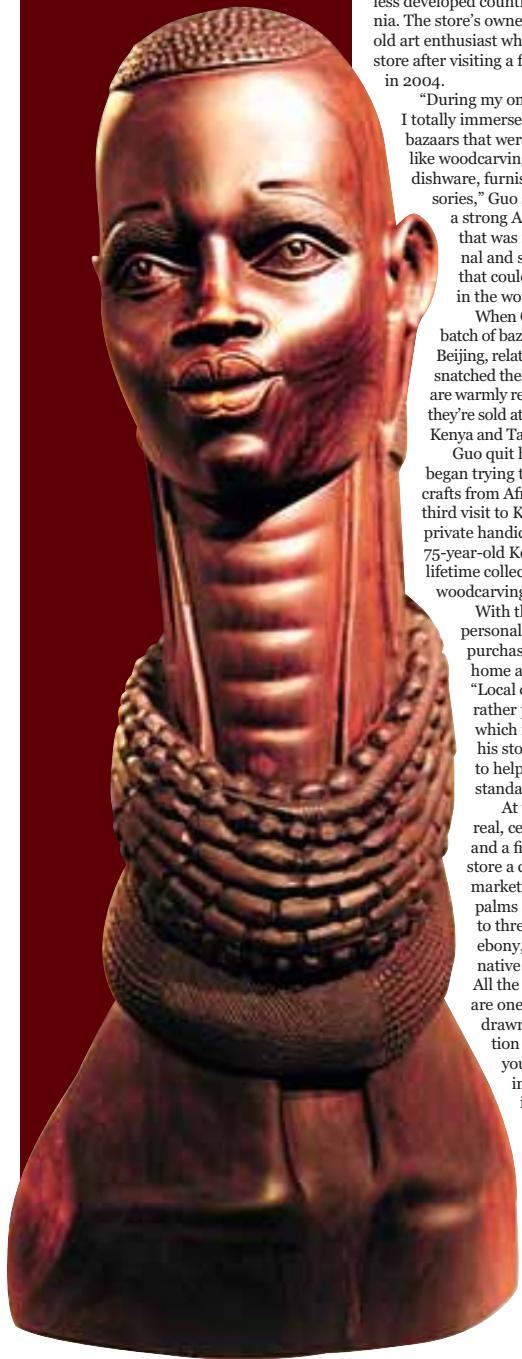
1dimensional.com – a publisher of Creative Commons-licensed chiptune albums



Bringing Africa into your Beijing home

Woodcarving of an African woman 45.800 yuan

Tanzanian artists made this 80-centimeter woodcarving using ebony. The subject's eyes express fortitude and an unwavering determination to make the most of her future.



Tucked away from the daily bustle of East Third Ring Road's Shilie Building Materials Street is an exotic African handicrafts and accessories store called Buffalo African Art Gallery. The biggest of its kind in the city, this 300-square-meter store features wooden and stone carvings, animal-skin musical instruments, paintings, furnishings and decorations.

The products are imported directly from African craftsmen in two of the continent's less developed countries, Kenya and Tanzania. The store's owner, Guo Li, is a 40-year-old art enthusiast who got the idea to open a store after visiting a family member in Kenya in 2004.

"During my one-month stay there, I totally immersed myself in the local bazaars that were full of local handicrafts like woodcarvings, paintings, wooden dishware, furnishings and home accessories," Guo said. "They expressed a strong African artistic sense that was natural, primitive, original and sensitive, and something that could not be found elsewhere in the world."

When Guo brought his first batch of bazaar purchases back to Beijing, relatives and friends quickly snatched them up. "Exotic handicrafts are warmly received in Beijing, but they're sold at relatively cheap prices in Kenya and Tanzania," Guo said.

Guo quit his job in Beijing and began trying to collect more handicrafts from Africa. In 2007, on his third visit to Kenya, Guo bought a private handicrafts museum from a 75-year-old Kenyan who had spent a lifetime collecting and protecting local woodcarvings.

With the museum and his personal collection of bazaar purchases, Guo opened his home accessory store in Beijing. "Local craftsmen in Africa live rather poor lives," Guo said, which is why he sends part of his store's profits to charities to help improve African living standards.

At the store's entrance are real, ceiling-high palm trees and a fish tank, making the store a can't-miss within the market building. Under the palms are several giraffes, one to three meters tall, made of ebony, a dense black wood native to Kenya and Tanzania. All the products in the store are one-of-a-kind, and have drawn art professors and auction house experts as well as young professionals looking to add some personality to their home décor.

Buffalo African Art Gallery

Where: A-7 Booth, B1 floor, Gaoli Fashion Market Building, Dongsanhuan Manlu, Chaoyang District
Open: 9:30 am – 6 pm
Tel: 8736 6070

By Chu Meng

The 2010 World Cup gave Africa unprecedented exposure to the outside world. Those in Beijing who wish to immerse themselves in more African culture are not without local options. *Beijing Today* found an African statuette store – the only genuine one of its kind here – that sells African handicrafts from the plateau continent.



All pieces are made by African craft artists.

Photos provided by Guo Li



Three members in a family 990 yuan

These three abstract sculptures of family members present Kenyan family values. The intertwined arms and legs symbolize the strength of familial connections. The totem-style woodcarving is actually a flower pillar, a perfect furnishing for the balcony. It is made of rose wood, a kind of ebony with darker colors and slicker surfaces after polishing.



Kenyan rhino 4,000 yuan

At one and a half meters tall, the Kenyan rhino is a preferred piece among interior designers for villas. The rhino is symbolic of the wild African veldt. A beautiful rhino woodcarving will complement any African-style decorations, especially in yards with big plants.



Iron silhouette of Tanzanian woman 2,200 yuan

Exaggerated but chic outlines of iron slides make up a beautiful Tanzanian woman wearing traditional earrings, necklaces and skirts that represent her birth tribe.



Soapstone giraffe family 780 yuan

Father, mother and baby giraffe bask happily in the African sun. As such, this Kenyan soapstone sculpture furthers the representation of traditional family values in African art.



Wife of a tribe chief 950 yuan

In this African ebony woodcarving, colored with mineral pigments, the unfeigned smile of this wife of a tribe chief beams with confidence, loyalty and love.



Bust of a tribe chief 5,000 yuan

The most impressive part of this work is the tribe chief's firm and persistent gaze. Staring into the distance, perhaps toward his beloved land and people, he shows the dignity of a leader who answers to a calling all his own.

Post-swimming indulgence

Restaurants near Chaoyang Park swimming pool

By Annie Wei

Outdoor pools are open only three months of the year, so take advantage of the water to beat the heat. The former Olympic swimming venue in Chaoyang Park is ideal for weekend excursions with friends or family since the place is surrounded by many eateries – the perfect ending to a day of fun

Meaty Korean barbecue feast

Qianshouyu, a Korean barbecue place, stands out among the restaurants on Lucky Street with its affordable, yet appetizing, fare and relaxing atmosphere. The restaurant, which features a terrace and dark green decoration, offers a wide selection of barbecued meats that won't bust your budget.

Besides the usual beef and pork (48 to 250 yuan), Qianshouyu also offers chicken and fish for the grill. Hot chicken wings cost 35 yuan per 250 grams, 22 yuan for the same amount of pepper-marinated chicken and 36 yuan for sautéed chicken gizzard.

Two hundred fifty to 300 grams of pan-fried yellow croaker costs 48 yuan, mackerel 28 yuan, saury 28 yuan and two yellow catfish 32 yuan.

If you're eating solo, *Beijing Today* recommends getting one of the set barbecue meals (starting at 38 yuan). It consists of three types of meat, a bowl of rice, soup, salad, an egg, leafy vegetables and three sauces for the meat: barbecue, oil and black pepper and fruit-flavored sauce. The waitress can grill the meat in front of you.

The restaurant offers traditional Korean desserts and freshly squeezed fruit juice (starting from 16 yuan). But we suggest you pass on the fruity beverages since they do not taste very good. Instead, opt for organic soy milk (5 to 10 yuan) at the nearby Lohos supermarket.

Qianshouyu

Where: A8, 1 Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 5867 0286 and 5867 0287

CFP Photo



European and Asian hotel specialties

There are few better things to do after an exhausting day swimming than to relax in the garden at Kranzler's, a Kempinski Hotel restaurant known for its sumptuous buffet of Boston lobsters and New Zealand oysters.

The spread includes European and Asian specialties like foie gras, a dozen types of cheese, sushi, Cantonese dim sum and northeastern Chinese favorites.

Its daily lunch buffet, at 198 yuan, offers simpler food. The Sunday family brunch (288 yuan) includes free fruit juices and soft drinks, while its 338-yuan buffet offers customers unlimited bubbly, white or red wine and Paulaner beer. Prices are subject to a 15 percent surcharge.

For diners who prefer to go à la carte, *Beijing Today* recommends Executive Chef Thomas Laberer's signature dish: battered red snapper fillets (95 yuan), fried till golden brown and served with anchovy-caper aioli.

There's also the home-made foie gras terrine (99 yuan) with truffles, marinated grapes and roasted country bread, and the Asian snack selection (68 yuan) with friend wantons, spring rolls, chicken satay, shrimp toast and pot sticky rice.

Kranzler's also has a good selection of pasta and vegetarian dishes. Its spinach and ricotta tortellini (58



Kempinski Hotel's desserts are well-known in town.

Photos provided by Wang Haiyan



Kranzler's has a wide selection of international cuisine.

yuan) is tossed with light cream cheese, while the spaghetti Bolognese (68 yuan) is prepared with

ground beef and semi-dried cherry tomatoes.

For a quick sandwich, *Beijing Today* recommends tuna salad on sun-dried tomatoes and black olive Panini (48 yuan), paired with capers, celery and red onions; or a stomach-filling steak sandwich (138 yuan), made of Australian sirloin

roasted baguette, guacamole, tomato salad and onion rings.

If you are craving for simple Chinese, *Beijing Today* recommends Hainanese chicken (112 yuan), free-range chicken cooked in its own broth, with soya dip, grated ginger, oriental chili sauce, organic vegetable and rice.

After dinner, head to Kempinski's popular deli house for chocolate indulgence (66 yuan): a feast of warm chocolate fondant, chocolate ginger crème brûlée, chocolate canoli and chocolate mascarpone ice cream.

Where: 1/F Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 6 am – midnight
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4222



Fried snake with red chili, 28 yuan

Both standard and creative Sichuan

Two-week-old Qixiangju is the newest addition to the restaurants at 8 Hao Gongguan, beside Chaoyang Park's west gate.

The Sichuanese restaurant specializes in shuizhuyu (48 yuan per 500 grams), boiled fish in fiery sauce, and yijue ganpian (58 yuan), boiled pork liver in chili sauce. A waiter said their fish stocks weigh at least a kilogram apiece, while their pork liver is shipped all the way from Sichuan and the Tibetan border.

An interesting variation on shuizhuyu is zhaopai meiwa (88 yuan), which uses frog meat.

Beijing Today also recommends as a main dish ganguo yaxiaba (88 yuan), dried and spicy duck bills with lotus root. The duck bills are seasoned, then fried with other ingredients, and the lotus root absorbs the sweet and spicy flavor – yummy!

Another special is called panlong (28 yuan each), made of fried eel or snake with red chili, quite tasty.

Diners who shun spicy food should go for hot-pot radish and taro (32 yuan) or pig feet soup (48 yuan).



Boiled pork liver in chili sauce, 58 yuan

For appetizer, this writer ordered the following: suanni bairou (32 yuan), pork in hot and garlicky sauce, with thinly sliced lean meat; and koushuiji (32 yuan), cooked chicken doused with a spicy sauce that includes Sichuan pepper, chili oil and sesame oil.

My vote for cold dish goes to kuju (18 yuan), endive with chopped chestnuts. The endive, a leaf vegetable not often seen in local restaurants, is a bit bitter but helps the body flush out heat.

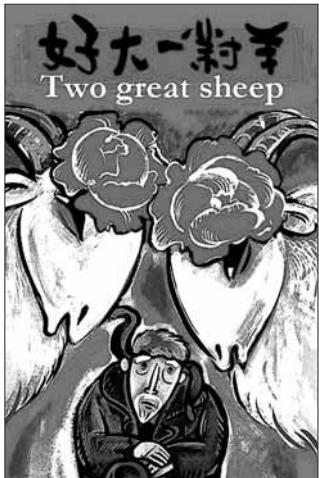
Qixiangju
Where: 8 Hao Gongyuan, Chaoyang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 10:30 am – 2 pm, 5-9:30 pm
Tel: 6508 8855



Dried and spicy duck bills with lotus root, 88 yuan

Photos by Ding Chunhan

Comedy about rural life



By He Jianwei

The bitter life of peasants is an eternal subject of Chinese film. It has inspired such international award winners as Zhang Yimou's *The Story of Qiu Ju* (1993) and Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984).

Liu Hao, born in 1970s, broke the mold with his second film, *Two Great Sheep*, a 2004 comedy about rural society. The film will appear at mainland cinemas next month – six years after its release.

Two Great Sheep revolves around Zhao Deshan and his wife Xiupei, who live in a poor, remote village in the mountainous part of Yunnan province.

Zhao works as a farmer, barely growing enough to feed himself and Xiupei, but the couple enjoys a peaceful life. Their lives are upheaved when the local mayor presents them with two foreign sheep donated by a former villager, now an official in Beijing.

The mayor hopes Zhao can breed the sheep to support a wool industry that would bring prosperity to the village. But the sheep react adversely to the harsh climate and require specialized care. The animals also refuse to eat local grass, wanting only fancy food.

When it becomes clear the sheep are a burden and not a boon, the mayor takes back the animals. But Zhao and his wife have already grown attached to them and do not wish to give them up.

"I've always been keen on art that deals with rural matters," the director, Liu Hao, said. "On the surface, the film deals with the randomness of local bureaucracy. But if you look deeper, there are a lot more things that are more worrisome than bureaucracy – the fear that persists on every stratum of society."

Two Great Sheep bagged three international awards in 2005: Best Feature at the Victoria Independent Film and Video Festival in Canada, Best Asian Film at the Deauville Asian Film Festival in France and Jury's Award at the Washington D.C. International Independent Film Festival.

Two Great Sheep

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, North section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: August 8, 4 pm; August 18, 9:30 pm; August 21, 7:30 pm; August 27, 7:30 pm; August 29, 4 pm

Admission: 30 yuan, 20 yuan for students

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Sunday, July 25

Exhibition

Hope Tunnel –
Zhang Huan Solo
Exhibition

The exhibition includes the wreckage of a train destroyed during the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake and a documentary showing its journey from Xi'an to Beijing.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 24, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: 15 yuan
Tel: 8459 9269

Movie Psycho (1960)

Marion Crane is a working girl from Phoenix, Arizona, who is fed up with sneaking away during lunch breaks to meet her lover, Sam Loomis, who cannot remarry because most of his money goes toward alimony. One Friday, Marion's employer asks her to deposit \$40,000 at a local bank. Desperate to turn her fortunes around, she skips town with Sam and the money, determined to start a new life

in California.

Where: Crystal Club Coffee & Bar, 2/F Building 12, Wanda Plaza, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 2 pm
Admission: 20 yuan for members, 30 yuan for non-members

Tel: 5960 3177

Nightlife Summer Waltz

Award-winning musicians Nino Gvetadze, a pianist from Georgia, and Frederike Saeijs, a Dutch violinist, have been performing as a duet since 2007.

Tel: 6586 0065
ext. 8213

Exhibition

Fantasy in the
Floating World –
Deng Xinli Solo
Exhibition

Deng, who came of age in the '70s, paints mythical versions of history.

Where: Linda Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 9, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9565



Friday, July 23

5

Movie

La Pianiste (The
Piano Teacher,
2001)

Forty-something Erika Kohut is a pianist and music teacher. Walter, a 17-year-old engineering student, auditions for her class and is forthright about his attraction to her. They begin to obsess about each other, although she initially tries to keep her distance by discouraging his application to the conservatory.

Where: Lady Book Salon, 2/F New World Shopping Mall, 7 Dong Damochang Jie, Chongwen District

When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6708 7470

Nightlife

SUBS Album Launch

The punk rock group has just released its latest album, *Queen of F-cking Everything*.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm
Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door

Saturday, July 24

6

Nightlife

Acid Live

The band plays funk, electro, house, dub, trip hop and acid jazz.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhangzhizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 100 yuan at the door
Tel: 6404 2711

Movie



La Femme Da Cote (The Woman Next Door, 1981)

Madame Jouve, the narrator, tells the tragic story of Bernard

and Mathilde. Bernard is living happily with his wife and son when, one day, a married couple, Philippe and Mathilde, moves into the house next door. This is the accidental reunion of Bernard and Mathilde, who had a love affair years ago.

Where: French Cultural Center, 1/F Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6553 2627

Exhibition

Ju Ming Living World Series

Sculpture Exhibition

Ju, an internationally renowned Taiwanese sculptor, presents a retrospective on his work in the past three decades.

Where: National Art Museum of China, 1 Wusi Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until August 13, daily, 9 am – 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 6400 1476

Where: Multi-Purpose Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: 7:30 pm
Admission: 160-300 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Upcoming

Movie

American Psycho (2000)

A wealthy New York investment-banking executive hides his alternate psychopathic ego from his friends and co-workers as he escalates deeper into irrational, wanton fantasies.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District
When: July 29, 6:35 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Stage in August

Concert

Myung-Whun Chung and the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-880 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Voice of Angel – Philadelphia Boys' Choir and Chorale

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: August 11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 10-100 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Cyprien Katsaris Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 21, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-380 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

White Bear – Wu Na with 'Beijing Express' from Belgium

Where: 46 Theater, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: August 27, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-80 yuan
Tel: 6417 0058

Drama

I Don't Want to Sing Alone

Where: Oriental Pioneer Theater, 8-2 Dongdan Santiao Wangfujing, Dongcheng District

When: August 10-22, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-380 yuan, 50 yuan for students
Tel: 6275 8452

I Love Peach Blossoms

Where: Multi-Purpose Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 12-15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-320 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

The Master Builder

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: August 19-20, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-200 yuan
Tel: 6275 8452

Opera

Thunderstorm

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 28-29, 7:30 pm
Admission: 120-480 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)



Cj Uf]Ub·Wphg Ubcb!dfcVYa 3

By Li Zhixin

While an extremely common gynecological problem, ovarian cysts can strike fear into the heart of any woman — especially since they are now being examined as a cause of decreased fertility.

As ovarian cysts enlarge, they can cause abdominal pain, pain during intercourse, menstrual irregularities and painful periods.

Hold off on surgery

Li Xia, 33, has been suffering lower abdominal pain and a sense of fullness for about half a year. An ultrasound revealed three cysts on her left ovary.

Her doctor suggested she take birth control pills, a common therapy used to shrink benign ovarian cysts. However, not only did her cysts fail to shrink — they grew.

"It has me very worried. I am afraid the cysts will develop into tumors," she said.

She said she planned to schedule a surgical removal.

However, her parents insisted that she try traditional Chinese medicine before going through with surgery. After four months of acupuncture, herbal medicine and a dietary shift, the cysts have vanished.

Western medicine divides ovarian cysts into three categories: follicular cysts, a fluid-filled growth; corpus luteum cysts, a yellow mass of tissue left after ovulation; and cystadenoma, a malignant tumor.

Li's cysts were follicular, and formed when a follicle failed to properly rupture and release an egg during ovulation.

"Women who have ovarian cysts should not rush into surgery if the cyst is smaller than 5 centimeters in diameter. Simple ovarian cysts are usually asymptomatic and benign. In many cases, they spontaneously disappear when treated by Chinese medicine," said Liu Ying, a doctor at Beijing Guoqi Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Traditional treatments

In traditional Chinese medicine, ovarian cysts are not considered a major medical problem. They are viewed as the product of three pathological factors: phlegm, dampness and blood stasis.

"Phlegm and dampness are caused by an imbalance in spleen energy," Liu said. The spleen processes food into chi and blood, and when its energy is deficient it begins to fail at these tasks.

This eventually results in a patient being unable to absorb nutrition. They become fatigued, gain weight and retain water.

The excess dampness in the system gradually coalesces into phlegm, which can manifest as lumps and masses of various kinds, including ovarian cysts.

"Diet is the key to maintaining good spleen health. Cold and raw foods and beverages are hard on the spleen because they force the body to waste chi to bring these foods up to body temperature," she said. "It is better to drink warm liquids and to cook vegetables lightly before eating.

Habitual overconsumption of greasy, fatty foods, sweets and alcohol are damaging to the spleen and are linked to other many health problems."

Blood stasis, the third cause, occurs when blood comes to a standstill in some of its normal pathways. The condition factors into many gynecological problems such as premenstrual syndrome and infertility.

When chi and blood slow down, they always cause stagnation-related effects. Blood stasis is an extreme form of blood stagnation that takes time to develop and begins with chi stagnation.

A failure of the liver is usually at the root of blood stasis. The liver is responsible for storing blood and regulating menstruation and emotions.

"Anger is the principal emotion associated with the liver. Unexpressed or inappropriately expressed anger can cause liver chi to stagnation, ultimately resulting in blood stasis. Staying positive is essential to treatment," she said.



CFP Photo

Natural ways to shrink cysts

1. Lay a hot water bottle or heating pad on your stomach. These can provide relief from abdominal pain.

2. Drink more water — no fewer than eight glasses daily. This keeps the body appropriately hydrated.

3. Reduce stress by drinking chamomile or raspberry tea. Herbal teas before bed can also help.

4. Take multivitamins, especially vitamins B and C and zinc. These strengthen liver function and the body's immune system and offer protection against abnormal cell growth.

5. Exercise regularly to keep your blood moving. Increased blood flow will circulate more white blood cells which can fight off infection and other ailments.

6. Drink less alcohol. Even wine can have a negative impact on the body and can contribute to the development or growth of a cyst.

7. Eat controlled portions rather than gorging. Stick to smaller, more frequent meals. Don't try to eat quickly or it may cause indigestion.

Last glimpse of a vanishing Beijing

A walk through soon-to-be-demolished hutong

By Zhang Dongya

Beijing has been under construction for close to 800 years, ever since it became the capital of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368).

Modern man's voracious appetite for high-rise offices, residential buildings and avenues are devouring the alleys and courtyard homes of ancient times. Next to face the bulldozer is Daji Lane, a collection of hutong, courtyards and guild halls located in the southwest.

Before Daji disappears, 90 Percent Travel invites you to take a walk through the area – a witness to the rich culture and history of China's last dynasties.



Daji Alley's hutong residents go on with their daily routine despite demolition work around them. It is business as usual for the street barbershop pictured above.

Photos by Mockingbird

Old glory of Daji

Daji Pian, or Daji Lane, in what used to be Xuanwu District, is host to 30 hutong, 300 courtyards and 78 provincial guild halls. It stretches from Caishikou Street in the west to Fenfang Liuli Street in the east; and from Luomashi Street in the north to Nanheng East Street in the south.

Many of Daji's hutong are estimated to have been built during the Jin Dynasty (1115-1234). Since Daji Pian (Auspicious Lane) was originally called Dajie, or "robbery," some people presume it was a chaotic community. Others say the old name reflects its having been a commercial and entertainment hub – its name an allusion to the exorbitant prices vendors often demand.

Whether or not it was a commercial area, what is undeniable is its scholarly roots.

Provincial guild halls, which in ancient times served as lodging houses for people who came to Beijing to take the civil service exams, began sprouting around Xuanwumen during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), and reached their heyday in Qing (1644-1912). A kilometer to Daji's east is Guangdong's Huguang Guild Hall: at 200 years, it is one of the city's oldest.

Some guild halls played a critical part in modern history. They became gathering places for progressives in the late 19th century, such as members of the 1898 Reform Movement. Others became known as the venue where Hu Shi, a reformer during the Republic of China period (1911-1949), founded an important newspaper, and the place where Lu Xun wrote his first short story collection, *Call to Arms*.

But by and large, the halls were abandoned and fell to disrepair with the decline of the imperial examination system in late Qing.

Ancient treasures of hutong

Today's Daji Lane has the smell of impending obliteration. Bold strokes of the character *chai*, meaning "demolition," adorn old walls in the maze of alleys.

Some courtyards have already been torn down, leaving nothing but shattered walls and broken tiles left. The luckier ones have enough walls standing to show Cultural Revolution (1966-76) slogans.

Among the remaining hutong is Fenfang Liuli Jie, a typical Ming Dynasty hutong that became famous in Ming for the Liu Family's noodle shop, which specialized in bean-and-sweet-potato noodles.

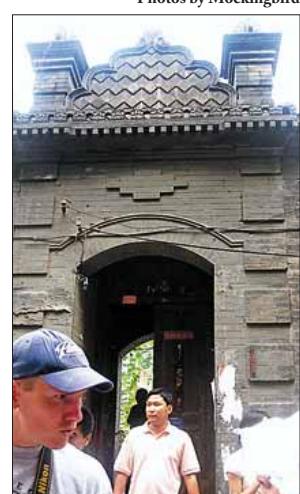
Fenfang's courtyards have gray walls and, despite repair work, retain their original architecture. Most yards still have their original gates, which feature gate piers and carved couplets. Present-day residents are known to still use honeycomb briquettes in winter.



Many provincial guild halls have been torn down.



Most hutong in Daji were built during the Jin and Ming dynasties.



Courtyard with a Baroque gate in Jiajia Hutong

Continued on page 21...



Guanzhong Guild Hall of Shaanxi, which features rare two-story buildings, has partly been demolished.
Photo by Kaleb Harkema

... continued from page 20

Located at 65 Fenfang Liul Jie is a courtyard with a *ruyi* door, which contains two ornaments at the top as a symbol of good luck. The carved couplet on the wooden door reads, "Doing good is the happiest deed; Reading books is the best," which speaks of a family that valued benevolence and education.

Courtyard No. 124 boasts of sophisticated brick carvings on the gate arch. Visitors can see carvings of bottles, a symbol for safety, and rolls that stood for learning.

Yard No. 115 used to be the residence of Liang Qichao, a Qing reformist. Since Liang was born in Xinhui, Guangdong province, it also became the site of the Xinhui Guild Hall. The courtyard is huge, but has lost its old-world charm

after numerous renovations.

In late Qing and Republican China, buildings that combined Chinese and Western architecture became the rage.

At 66 Jiajia Hutong is a courtyard with a Baroque gate. The lone house standing features a ceiling carved with floral patterns and eaves with overhanging decorations mimicking Western designs.

Nearby is courtyard No. 35, the former residence of Lin Zexu, a Qing official and scholar. Next to it is the Yongzhou Guild Hall of Hunan province, which now houses a police station.

At courtyard No. 5 in the neighboring Baoansi Jie, visitors will find the Xiangtan Guild Hall of Hunan province. It is best known as the site of revolutionary activities in which Mao Zedong participated, but has long been overtaken by locals. Its wooden gate is a faded version of a once fiery red and weeds have taken over the roof.

Yard No. 7, which has partly been demolished, consists of two-story buildings that used to be the Guanzhong Guild Hall of Shaanxi province. It was rare to see such "high" buildings in old Beijing, but its look was an import from Shaanxi.

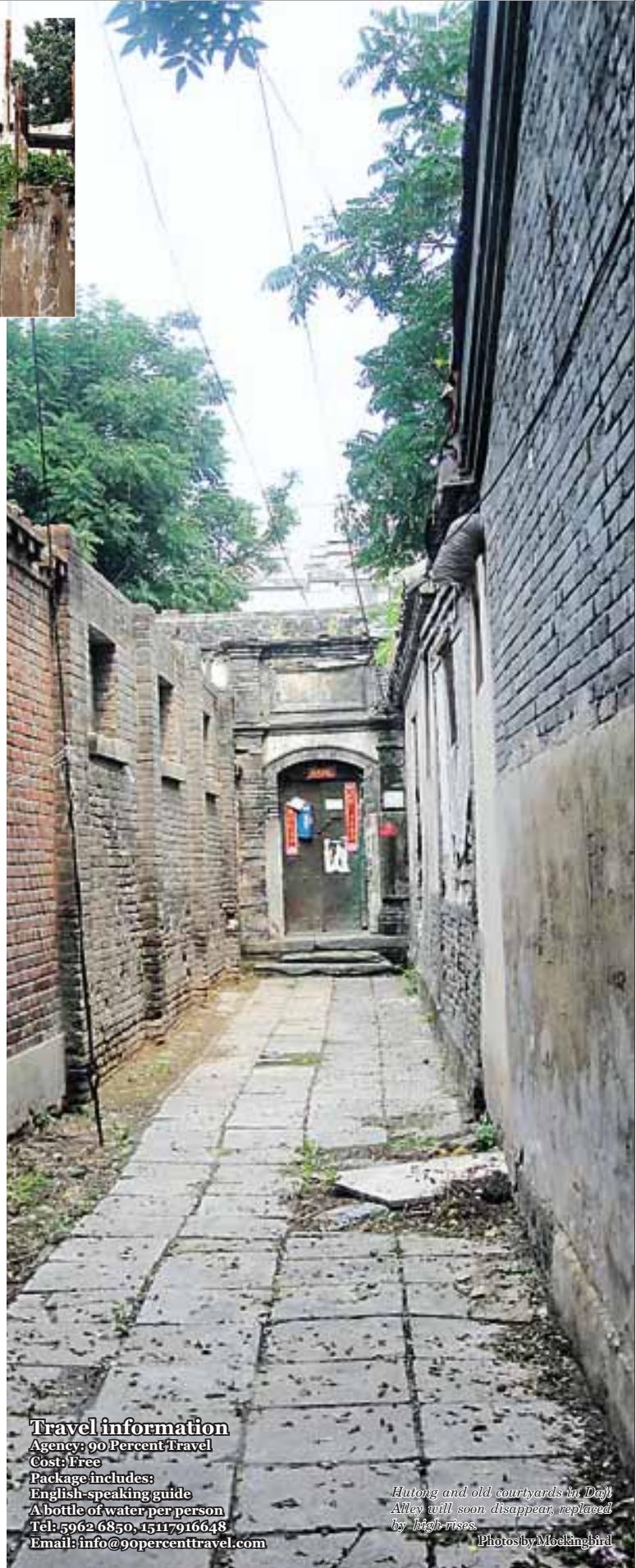
The last stop on the trip is the Nanhai Guild Hall of Guangdong province. Located in Mishi Hutong, the hall is also the former residence of Kang Youwei, another Qing reformist. It was once called Qishu Tang, or seven-tree yard, for it used to contain seven big trees, but now only one remains.

At the end of Mishi Hutong is an old coffin store. It is a large shop with a carved signboard on its eaves, advertising coffins made of wood from places like Jiangxi and Fujian. It is Beijing's last coffin store with its original signboard.

Rows of centuries-old Chinese scholar trees line the hutong, giving visitors the feeling of being thrown back in time.

The hutong's remaining residents go on with their daily routine despite the rumbling of bulldozers nearby. Elderly men play Chinese chess, mahjong or cards out on the lanes. The street barbershop remains open, charging 3 yuan for a haircut – the cheapest in town. Some men play with their pet birds and are only pleased to chat with visitors who pause to ask questions.

Beyond Daji's walls are commercial areas that are fast closing in. The demolition project, which began in 2003, is gobbling up the remaining buildings, and another part of old Beijing vanishes before your eyes.



Travel information

Agency: 90 Percent Travel

Cost: Free

Package includes:

English-speaking guide

A bottle of water per person

Tel: 5962 6850, 15117916648

Email: info@90percenttravel.com

Hutong and old courtyards in Daji Alley will soon disappear, replaced by high-rises.

Photos by Mockingbird



Dining



Italian pizza

Pizza is all about the quality of the cheese, and Valley Cafe doesn't skimp on the mozzarella. Its pies feature four cheeses divided into sections. The asiago is the best of the four and brings out the tangy tomato base. The scamorza, a smoked cheese, is unique and almost meaty. There's also the gorgonzola — a very smooth choice. Pair up a delicious pizza with golden crunchy fries and indulge.

Where: Valley Cafe, Crowne Plaza Beijing Zhongguancun, 106 Zhichun Lu, Haidian District
Tel: 5993 8888



Celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival

Mid-Autumn Festival is an important time for family reunions. If you cannot be with the one you love, at least you can share the same moon and feast on the same mooncakes. This year, the Grand Millennium Beijing has a distinctive box of six exquisite cakes packed in specially designed boxes for your friends and families.

Where: Yao Chi Cantonese Restaurant, Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 196 yuan net per box (6 pieces); includes White Lotus paste with egg yolk, red bean paste, low-sugar pumpkin, green bean paste, green tea paste and assorted nuts and Chinese ham

Tel: 8587 6888 ext. 3013



International taste

Redmoon restaurant and bar offers three Grand Marnier cocktails to enrich your after-dinner experience. The Grand Marnier blends cognac with colorful, bitter-orange flavor for a complex finish. Guests can select from Chinese, Japanese and French-themed Grand Marniers mixed with fresh fruit.

Where: Redmoon Restaurant and Bar, Grand Hyatt Beijing, 1 Dong Chang'an Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm (Monday-Friday), 5 pm – 1 am (Sunday-Thursday), 5 pm – 2 am (Friday and Saturday)

Tel: 8518 1234 ext. 6024



Mid-autumn mooncakes

Find the perfect gift for family, friends and colleagues with a box of the Kempinski Hotel Beijing's luxurious mooncakes. Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, when the moon is at its fullest. Our mooncakes come with gourmet fillings like lotus seed, egg yolk and five-seed as well as more innovative creations like blueberry, green tea and royal milk.

Where: Kempinski Hotel Beijing, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 198 yuan (Imperial Mooncake), 428 yuan (Imperial Deluxe Mooncake), 468 yuan (Grand Imperial Mooncake), 20 yuan (Single Mooncake); save 30 percent on orders before August 16; save 5 to 30 percent after August 16 depending on volume

Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4200

Take a bite of sports at ROOMbeijing's intimate session with Kevin Garnett

This August 1, as part of its series of Intimate Sessions, ROOMbeijing is giving patrons the chance to meet NBA star Kevin Garnett and some of his fellow basketball players. ROOMbeijing is offering a set dinner menu for 688 yuan (10 percent surcharge). Dinner starts at 7 pm and will be followed at 10 pm by

an after-party spun by DJ WORDY, the three-time China DMC champion. Admission is free, but reservations are recommended.

Where: ROOMbeijing, 301-302, PARK LIFE Shopping Center, Beijing Yintai Center, 2 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8517 2033

Xinwei celebrates 10 years

Xinwei, the Chinese edition of ViVi, the most popular Japanese fashion and lifestyle magazine, celebrated its 10-year anniversary at Wangjing Jiamao Shopping Center last Sunday. With a circulation of 900,000 copies

per month, the magazine covers big cities throughout the country. Statistics from 2009 showed Xinwei and the local brand Rayli were the best-selling fashion magazines in the Chinese market. (By Zhang Dongya)

Hotel

Traders Hotel opens in Hong Kong

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is pleased to announce the August 1 opening of the Traders Hotel in Hong Kong. Traders, Shangri-La's mid-market brand, caters to the business and leisure traveler looking for down-to-earth functionality and service with a smile. Previously operating as Hotel Jen, the shift to Traders will allow the hotel to take advantage of Shangri-La's global sales and distribution network and the brand's Golden Circle guest recognition and airline partner programs.

Traders Hotel, Hong Kong is offering special introductory packages. For reservations, e-mail reservation.thhk@shangri-la.com or phone (852) 2213 6663.

For more information, visit tradershotels.com.

Autumn Giving, Embrace — Beijing Charity Moon Cake Collection 2010

China World Hotel's holiday program, "Autumn Giving, Embrace — Beijing Charity Moon Cake Collection 2010," is raising funds for Hua Ao, a local school for the children of low-income migrants. The initiative is part of the hotel's commitment to support local underprivileged communities. The hotel's mooncake gift boxes include two white lotus and two red lotus paste cakes, each with an egg yolk. Each box is priced at 138 yuan, of which the hotel will donate 50 yuan to improve Hua Ao's facilities.

For more information, visit shangri-la.com.

Regent Beijing best in business at annual awards

The Regent Beijing, a luxurious 500-room property only minutes from Tiananmen Square, was recently recognized as "Best Business Hotel Top 5" by HOTELS China at its Annual Hotel Award 2010. The award is given to hotels with excellent facilities and outstanding service. In its four years of operation, the Regent Beijing has won numerous international awards and was named one of the Asia Top 100 by Conde Nast Traveler's Readers' Choice Awards, one of the World's Best Business Hotels and Asia's Best MICE Hotel.

For more information, visit regenthotels.com/beijingen.

Event

Aviation

EU approval for transatlantic joint business

British Airways, American Airlines and Iberia received final regulatory approval from the European Commission on July 14 to partner on transatlantic flights. The airlines are waiting on a final decision by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) that would grant anti-trust immunity.

The transatlantic joint business will strengthen competition across the Atlantic by enabling One-world Alliance members to compete on a level playing field with other global alliances that have anti-trust immunity.

Customers will benefit from seamless, convenient travel to more global destinations and better connections, improved flight schedules and enhanced frequent flyer benefits. The airlines plan to begin their transatlantic joint business this autumn.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.



CFP Photo

Chiefs and Indians in the FIFA World Cup

By He Jianwei

Although Spain became the newest team to have its name etched on the FIFA World Cup trophy last Monday, the championship match that ended 1-0 was not very exciting. Midfielder Andres Iniesta drove the ball into the Dutch net in the second half of extra time, when The Netherlands was down by one man after defender John Heitinga got a red card.

During the month-long soccer tournament, my friend Martin Deng and I rooted for Germany, which finished in third place. We favored Germany not only because it scored 16 goals in seven matches, but also because its young players became stars in their first World Cup appearance.

Striker Thomas Mueller made five goals and received the Golden Boot in South Africa, the award

for the Cup's top goal scorer. The 20-year-old made his international debut only in March but edged out Spain's David Villa and Diego Forlan and The Netherlands' Wesley Sneijder – who each made five goals – with his three assists.

Mueller's performance helped Germany reach the semifinals and also won him the Best Young Player award.

"A combination of wit and courage," my friend Deng said of the athlete. "He is not only a good forward, but also an eloquent speaker."

After Germany defeated England in the Round of 16, Mueller said the English team had "too many chiefs and not enough Indians," when he was asked to comment on Germany's win.

"What did he mean by that?" I asked.

"I think he meant England had too many stars, who will always be part

of the international soccer scene," he said. "The team just had too many leaders, which made it difficult to steer all the players in one direction."

"But what did it have to do with India?" I said.

"Hmm ... maybe the expression originated in Indian culture," he said.

Several days later, Deng and I were still talking soccer. He told me he made the right guess about Mueller's remark on "chiefs" and "Indians."

The phrase apparently refers to American Indians, in which there is only one chief per tribe and the rest are followers, or regular "Indians," who carry out the leader's orders.

"Too many chiefs and not enough Indians" means too many people want to be the leader and not enough are willing to follow orders and do the hard work," Deng said.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Mobile phone replenishing gets stuck

By Tiffany Tan

This is not a business sign. This is a sign of no business. "Stuck" spells disaster for any enterprise, except if you're a television station producing shows like *Lost* or *Survivor*, or a travel agency selling honeymooners uninterrupted personal time on some remote island.

Since this shop is clearly in the communications industry, stuck is very bad. There are people out there who will starve themselves – maybe even sell their grandmothers – just to buy a new cell phone every few months. Well, the store has def-



initely lost this profitable clientele since it cannot "replenish" its mobile phone supply.

The first step to decoding this sign is knowing that it is actually advertis-

ing mobile phone recharge cards, or *shouji chongzhika*. Not being able to sell these cards is probably worse than not being able to sell mobile phones, since people seem to buy phone credit as often as they buy ice cream in summer.

"Stuck" found itself astray in this sign because *ka*, or card, means "stuck" in certain contexts. Getting unstuck is pretty simple. Just write: mobile phone top-up, or recharge, card. The shop can then rejoin those enterprises that have signboards to help them make money.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. Optics

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): Optics is a branch of physics that deals with light and vision, but nowadays, the word is increasingly being used in the political arena. You can't find this usage in the dictionary, but it means "political appearances and images." After US President Barack Obama responded to the failed Christmas airliner bombing while on vacation in Hawaii, some Republicans said the setting was "bad optics." One of them said, "Hawaii, to many Americans, seems like a foreign place. I think those images, the optics, hurt President Obama very badly."

The word appeared as early as 1978 in the *Wall Street Journal*. In a story on business leaders being invited to the White House as a sign of President Jimmy Carter's appreciation, the paper quoted a presidential special advisor as saying, "It would be a nice optical step."

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): If many Americans think Hawaii is a foreign country, perhaps we need to be careful about following the "Bush-istic" evolution of American English. I think there is a difference between a language evolving and people just making stuff up. Just because one lemming jumps off the cliff, doesn't mean the rest of them have to follow – although most of them will.

2. The Monument of the People's Heroes

ZS: We can't say that this Chinese-English translation is wrong, but we're used to saying: The Monument to the People's Heroes. There are cases in which monument is followed by "of" instead of "to"; for instance, "The Hoover Dam is a monument of engineering" and "The professor's assistants were monuments of learning." However, I think when it is a monument dedicated to people, it would be better to use "monument to," such as, "monument to F. D. Roosevelt" or the "monument to a martyr." Here's an example from *The New York Review of Books*: "The resplendent Philadelphia exhibition and its fascinating catalog are a monument to the still powerful formulation of Clement Greenberg." In this sense, it is fairly similar in usage to "memorial": the memorial to F. D. Roosevelt, or to a martyr.

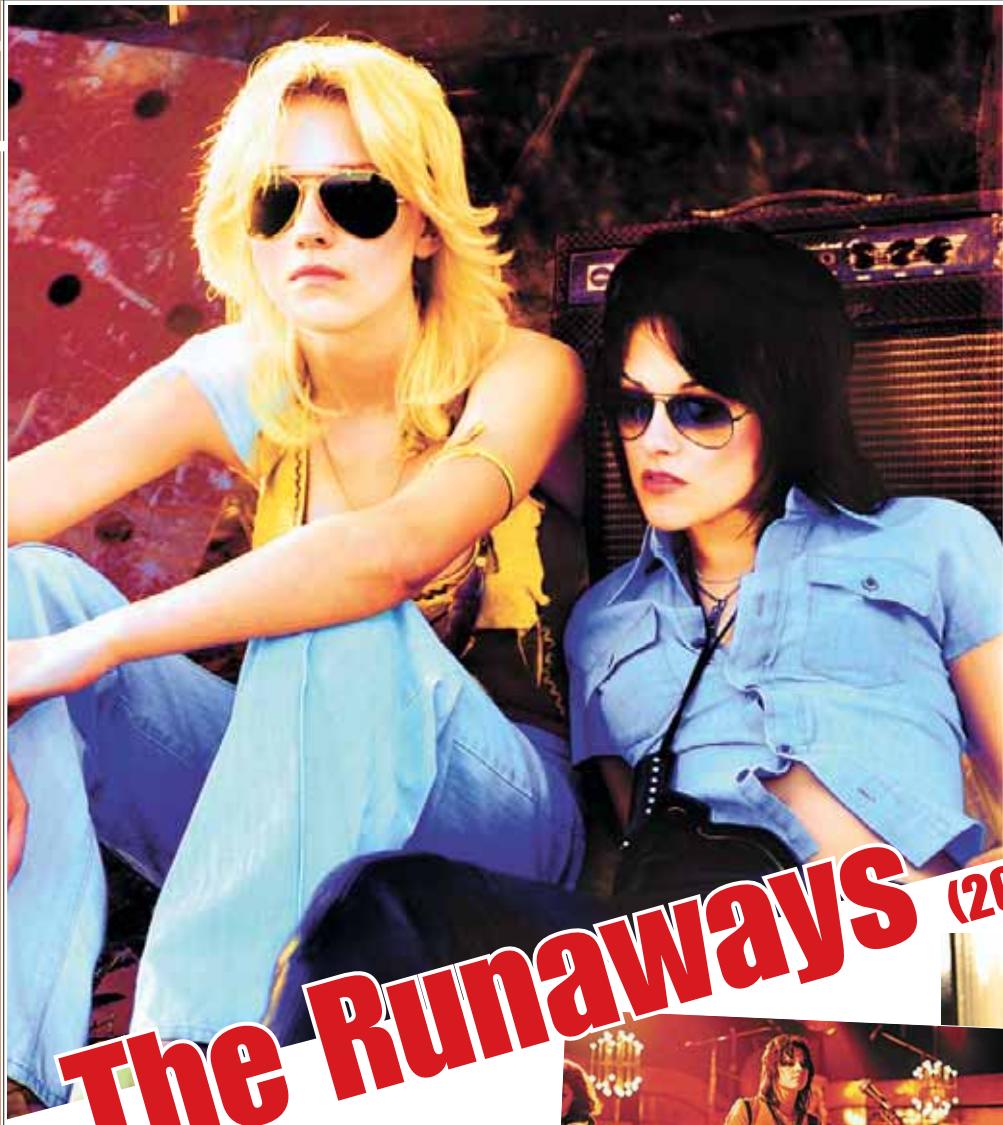
TBZ: Monuments and memorials, as Professor Zhu said, are used fairly interchangeably in Canada, where I'm from. These terms are used for serious things: the National War Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Memorial to Terry Fox – and almost every small town has a cenotaph, for example the Monument des Braves. But they also include roadside kitsch: the Big Nickel, the Big Goose and the UFO landing pad, to name a few. I wonder – and I'm just throwing this out for casual discussion – does the change from "to" to "of" create a sense of psychological space between what was important then to what is more pressing now?

3. It is not the dollar is strong but its peers are so weak.

ZS: There is no mistake in this sentence. It is in the pattern of "not ... but," like we had last issue: Winners of the election will have no choice but to make unpopular budget cuts. However, there is still a slight difference between the two. Last week's example involves phrases; this week's introduces noun clauses that are connected with a verb or predicate.

The latter has to take the pattern "not that ... but that," as in the classic Shakespearean verse: It is not that I don't love you but that I love you too much. So, if we stick to standard English-writing rules, the sentence on top should have been written: It is not that the dollar is strong but that its peers are so weak.

TBZ: Just to confuse everyone – the sentence could also read: It is not the dollar that is strong but its peers that are weak. To make it more accurate, perhaps we should say the "US dollar," considering that the Canadian dollar is doing fairly well.



The Runaways (2010)

Scene 1

(Joan meets Kim for the first time outside a club.)

Joan Jett (J): You're Kim Fowley?

Kim Fowley (K): I am the King Hysteria himself. And let me guess, you sing in a band ... and it's the greatest band in the world ... and I am the luckiest star f—ker in outer space because I get to hear it first, right?

J: I'm Joan Jett. I play ... I play guitar ... electric guitar.

K: Joan Jett, that's a cool name. You guys got a demo?

J: No ... no, I don't ... no guys. I wanna start an all-girl rock band.

K: Really? Maybe I am the luckiest star f—ker after all. Hey, Sandy. Sandy West is a drummer. Joan Jett claims to be some sort of guitar goddess.

J: Well, I didn't say that goddess thing.

Sandy West (S): No, no, it's cool, man. These guys are talking about going to some party... on the south side. It's supposed to be *bitchin* (1). You wanna go?

J: No, I mean, I can't tonight. But we should jam.

S: Yeah.

J: You play drums?

S: Yeah, let's play.
K: See what kind of noise you two make, call me if you have something that won't make me regret giving you my number, OK?

J: OK.

Scene 2

(Problems occur in the rehearsal room before the Japan tour.)

K: What are you laughing at? You think you can sing like that in front of people? In front of a customer? You bitches have got to start thinking like men, OK? No more snip snails and puppy dog tails. Men wanna f—k.

Men want this, filthy pugs. And we're gonna give it to them. We're gonna put it right in their face and then take it back, just to break their hearts.

Oh, what, Cherie? I'm sorry. Tell me, seriously, are you tired?

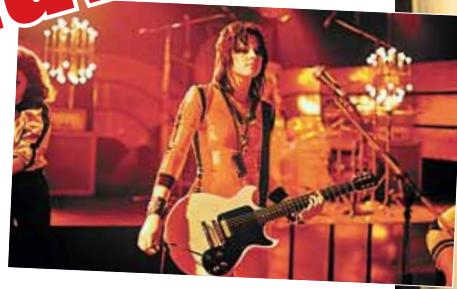
Cherie Currie (C): Yeah.

K: Yeah? Are you bored?

C: Yeah, actually I am.

K: Oh, yeah? Well, guess what, you're not allowed to be tired. You're not permitted to be bored. You're an employee. You are my property and you will do as I say or you can go fold tacos with your better-looking sister.

J: Kim, we're a band. I mean, we don't work for you.



C: Yeah, OK, I'm losing my voice, I'm taking a break.

K: Oh, little diva. Well, I got a news flash. This ain't the opera. They're not coming to hear your chops, OK? They're not coming to see little girls banging on their little drums. This is the music business, OK?

You wanna be an artist? **Saw off** (2) your ear and send it to your boyfriend. You wanna be a rock star, you listen to me. OK? Now Cherie's lack of greatness, her lack of rock 'n' roll authority, is *getting in the way* (3) of our product.

What is our product? Lita, what's our product, huh? Sex, violence, revolt. OK, now, I'm going to teach you prima donnas how to think with your cocks, OK?

(A fight occurs in the studio between the girls about a story in a magazine.)

K: Bravo, kiddies. Bravo.

C: What is this?

(Cherie throws the magazine to Kim.)

Lita (L): It's pretty nasty, Kim.

K: This? This is what we call controversy. This is what we call publicity. It's what we call a juicy story! Oh, and you're welcome. By the way, thanks to me this article is twice as long and half of it is about you OK?

It's press, my budding young **starlet** (4), not prestige. Get used to it. Get in that booth and finish the song. We've got this place on lockout. I'm *paying out the nose* (5). Let's go. Let's go. Sing.

C: No.

K: No?

C: No.

J: Come on. Cherie, come on. C: I'm not singing.

K: Oh, Cherie. Of course you're singing, you're a singer. That's what you do. You sing and you strut around in your underwear, OK? But most importantly,

Movie of the week
 Getting dragged back to the mid-'70s can be fun, especially when it's for rock 'n' roll.

Based on lead singer Cherie Currie's autobiography, *The Runaways* provides an overview of the formation, sudden fame and equally sudden breakup of the first all-girl rock band. The story focuses on Cherie Currie and Joan Jett, but mostly on Currie. Dakota Fanning plays Currie as a confused 15-year-old in a messed-up family.

Jett is played by Kristen Stewart – the girl from *Twilight*. Here she shows off the kind of talent we saw in her pre-*Twilight* days. She captures the fire and spirit of Jett and leaves little doubt she will pursue her dreams despite all obstacles.

Synopsis

The movie focuses on the Runaways' formation and meteoric rise to fame. Their first single, "Cherry Bomb," gets some play in the US, after which The Runaways go on a country-wide tour of major venues and sleazy rock clubs where they are paired with The Ramones, Cheap Trick, Tom Petty and other 1970s rock acts.

Currie is initially thrilled to be in the band and lives the rock star life. But during a tour of Japan her personal life disintegrates and she burns out – ultimately leaving The Runaways when they return to the US.

Jett decides rock 'n' roll is her life, and that The Runaways is her family. While Currie's decision upsets her, part of her knows it's what is best for her friend.



you do what I tell you to do. And right now I'm telling you to get in the booth, so get in the booth.

C: No.

K: Get in the booth before I lose my patience and send you back where I rescued you from.

C: Good. Send me back. I don't give a shit. I wanna go back.

K: Careful. Get in the booth.

C: No. I'm not gonna be your little lap dog anymore. You've been speaking for me this whole time. You get in the booth. I'm done.

Vocabulary

1. **bitchin:** a crude superlative
2. **saw off:** cut off with a saw
3. **get in the way of:** to interfere with

4. **starlet:** a young film actress publicized as a future star
5. **pay out the nose:** to pay an incredible amount of money

(By Wang Yu)